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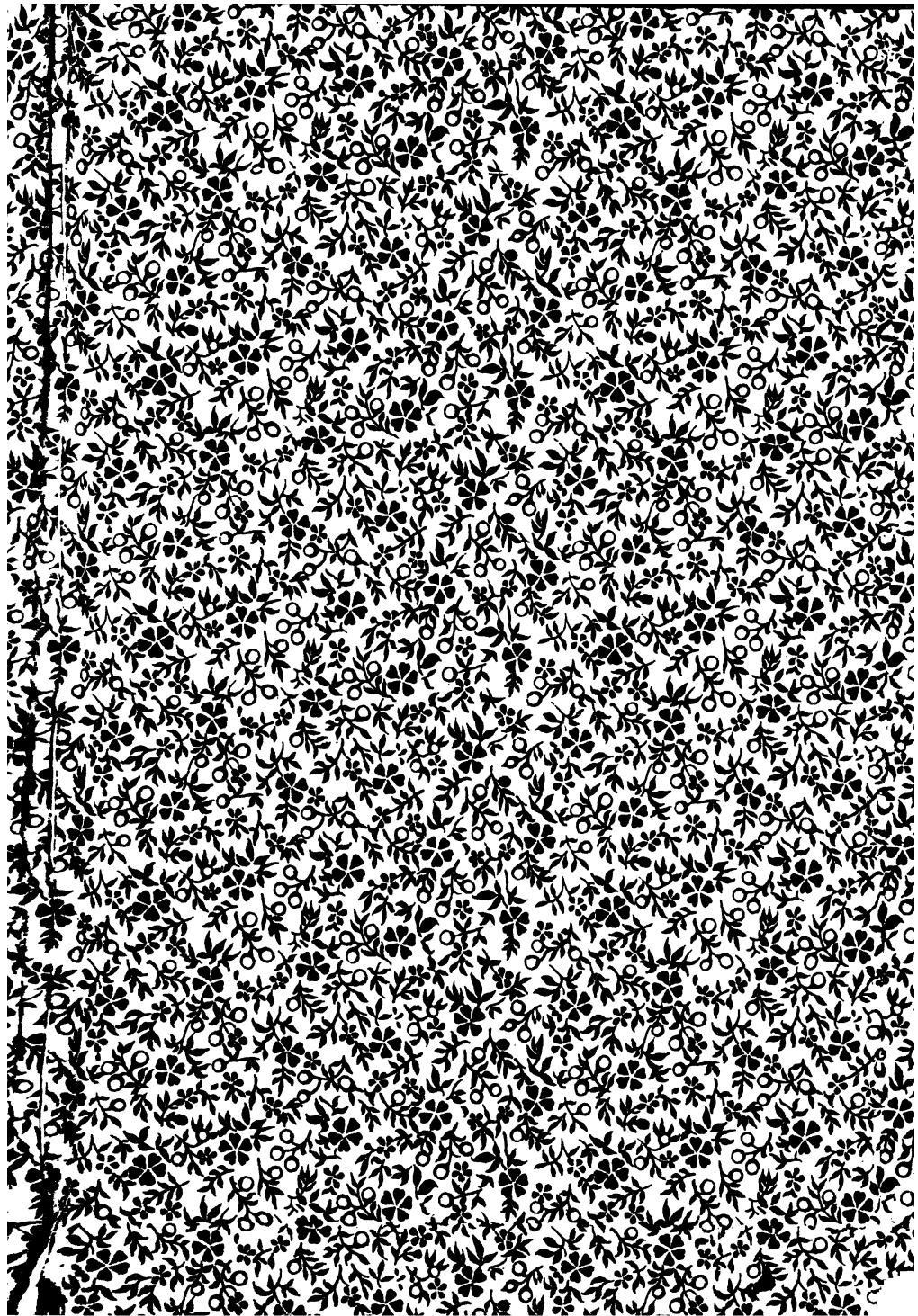
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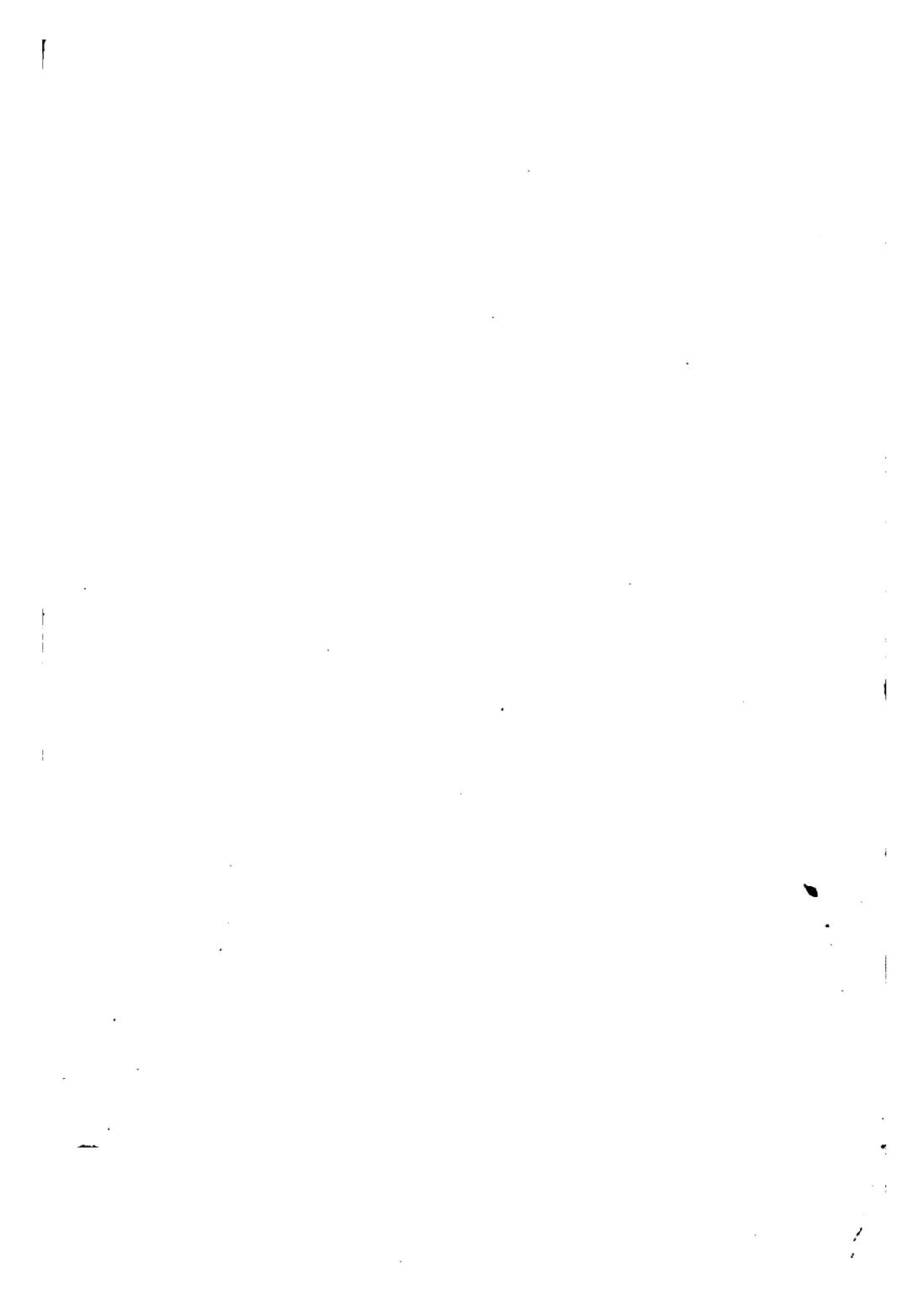
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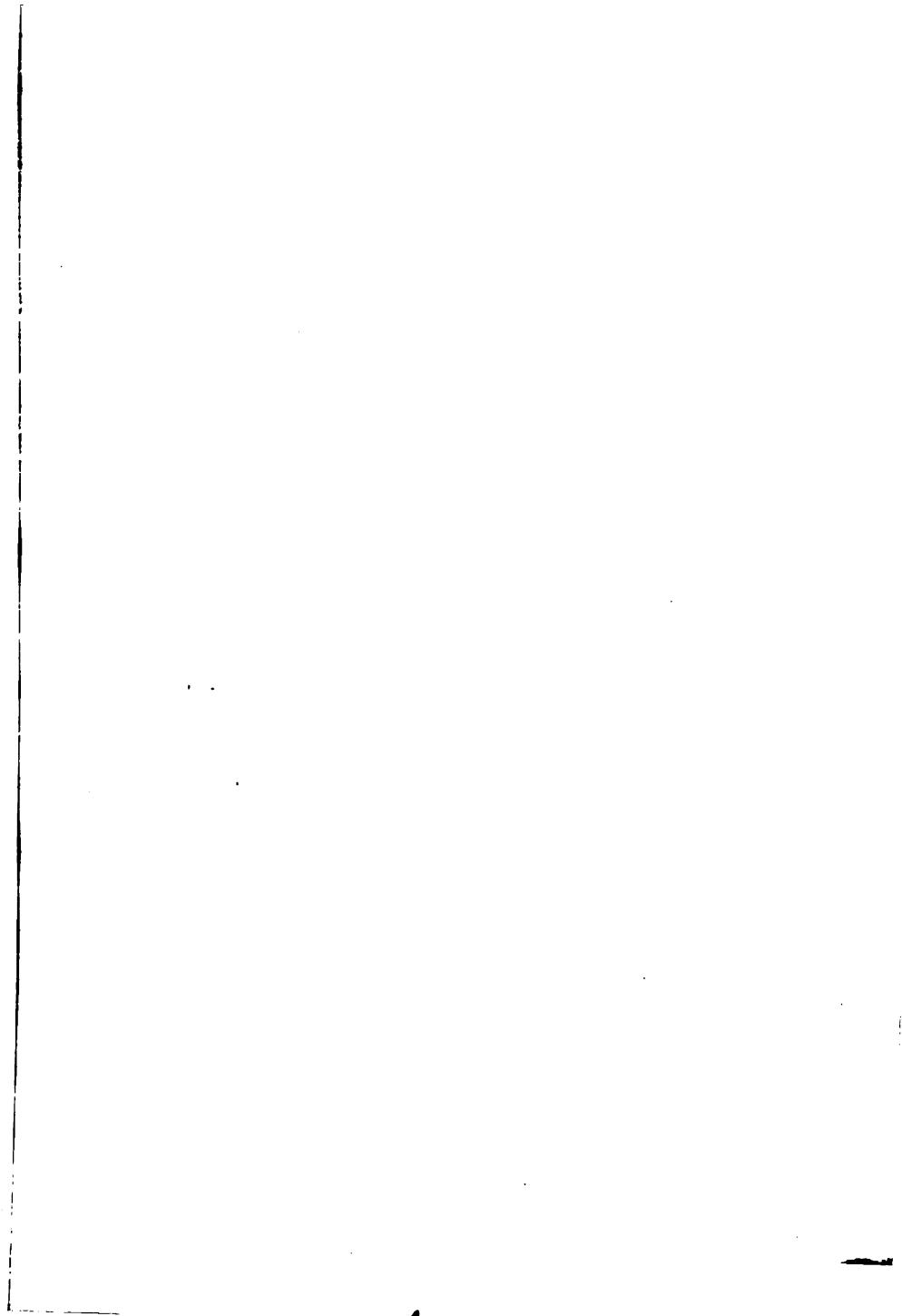
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MODERN MIRACLES

AND OTHER SERMONS.

*Charles W.
Jacobs*
C. J. BALDWIN,

Pastor First Baptist Church, Granville, Ohio.

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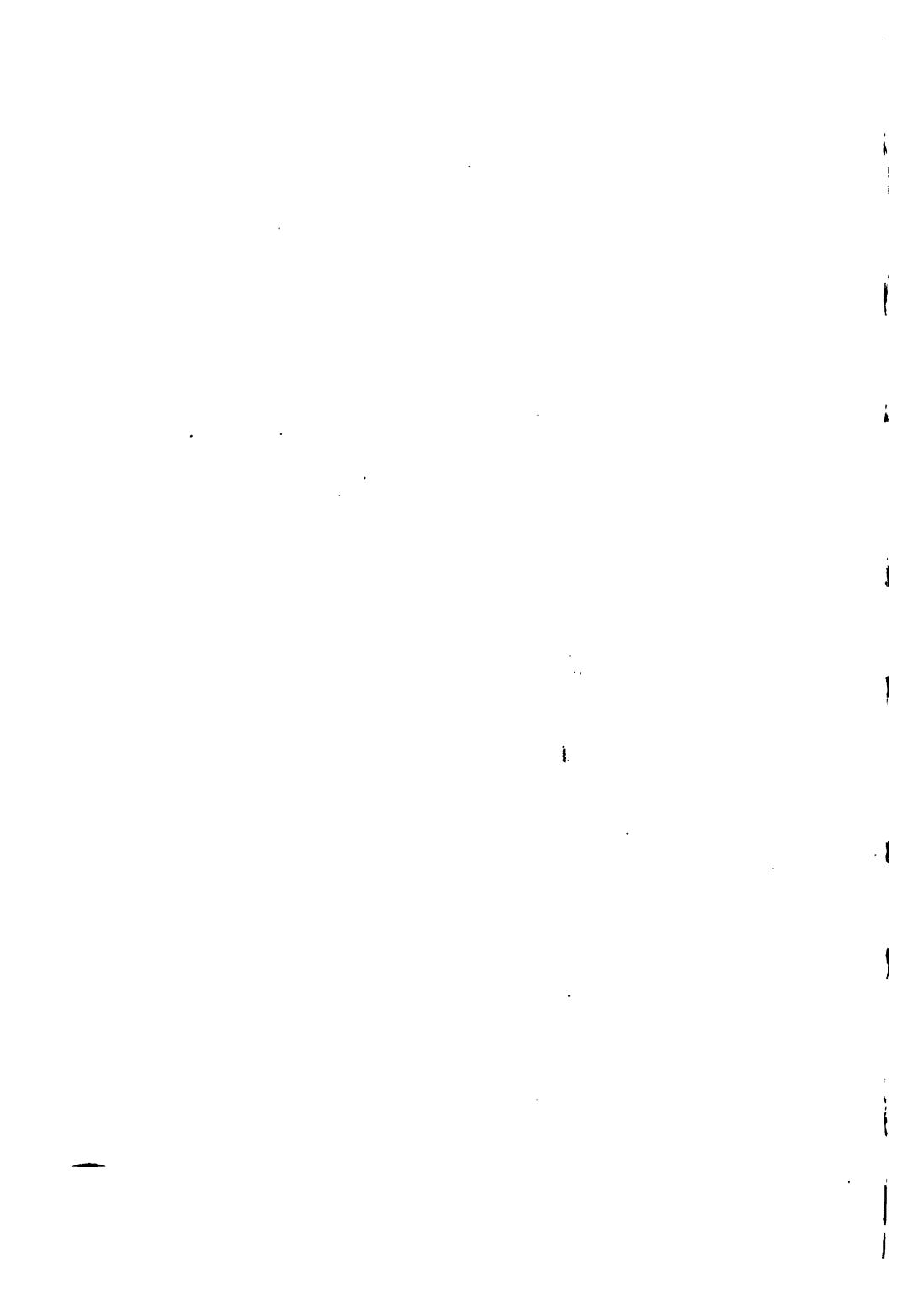
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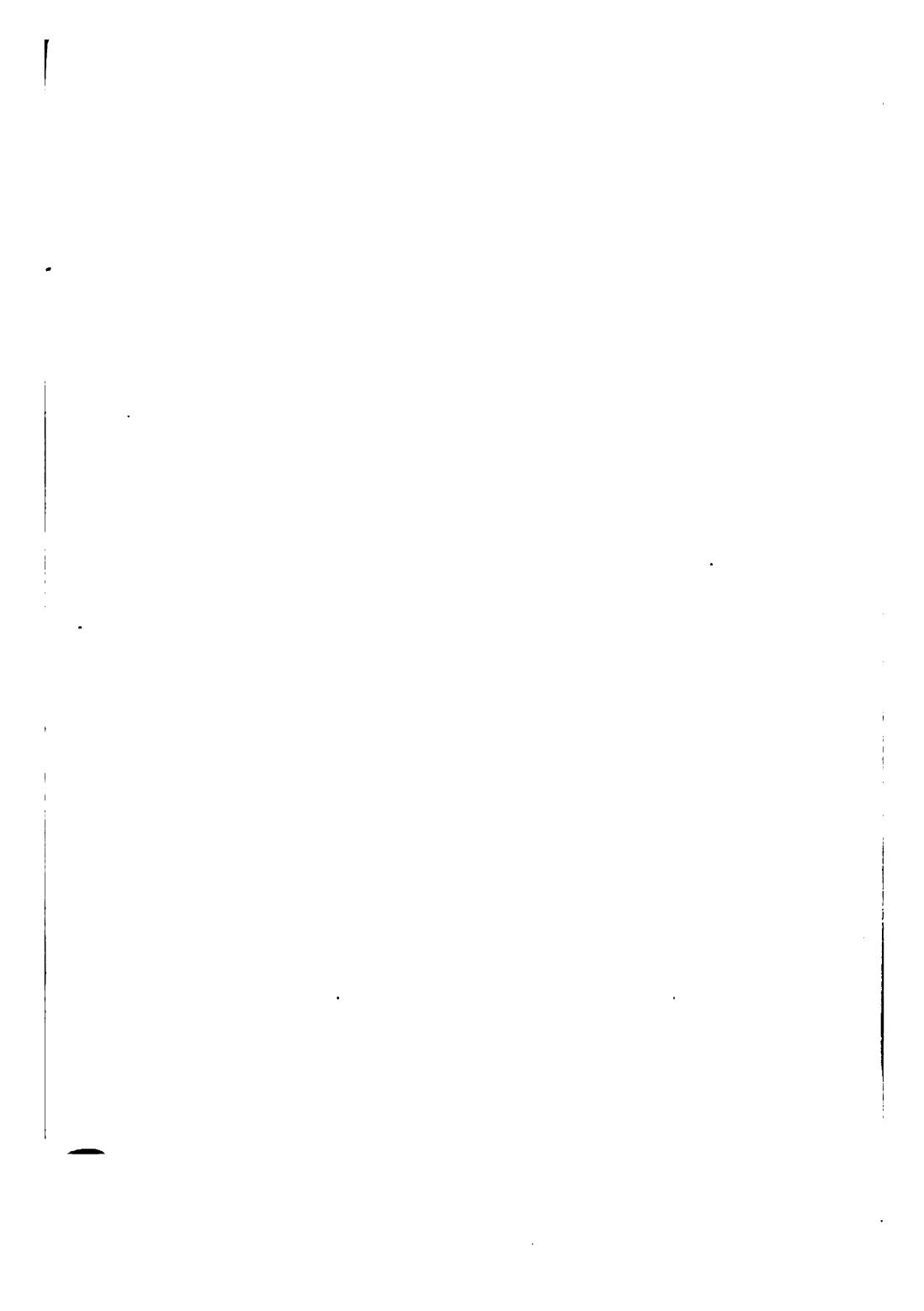
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To
My Father on Earth
and
My Mother in Heaven
I
dedicate this book.

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SERMONS.



1.

MODERN MIRACLES.

"There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all."—I Cor. 12:6.

WHEN the Moravian missionaries were introducing the Gospel among the Indians of this country in the last century, they encountered great opposition. The red men resented and resisted the religion, as well as the politics, of the pale face. Count Zinzendorf, one of the most devoted and successful of the pioneers, endeavored to establish a mission in the wilds of Pennsylvania, but the natives distrusted him and attempted his assassination. Some of them having crept toward his tent at midnight, peering in through the doorway, saw the venerable man reclining on the floor and studying his Bible by the light of the fire. So intent was he on his work that he did not notice, what the Indians saw, a venomous serpent which had made its way into the tent, and was crawling over the Count's limbs. The savages gazed awestruck at the fearful scene, and when they saw the reptile glide away harmlessly, they too departed—believing that the white man must be under the protection of the Great Spirit. From that time the missionary had no difficulty in securing for the Gospel a respectful hearing from the Indians; and the missionaries always regarded that midnight incident (described to them afterwards by the would-be assassins) as a Providential interposition in their behalf.

Believers in the Bible will have no difficulty in assenting to such a view. It is but a modern application of ancient principles. We need only recall the story of Moses and Israel in Egypt, of Esther and the Jews in Persia, of Daniel's deliverance from the lions and of Jonah's escape from the sea, to feel assured of the reality of the Divine protection of human life in this world. And yet we must guard against giving too wide a scope to this doctrine. Is it true that man's extremity is always used by God as his opportunity? Has he always interfered to rescue his people from danger? Paul was saved from the serpent's bite on the island, but not from the headsman's axe at Rome. The Moravian missionary was protected from assassination, but Judson was left to suffer in the prison pen. The Hebrews were delivered from the fiery furnace, but Huss and Jerome perished at the stake.

We may not therefore predicate a special interposition of divine providence as a factor in every problem of human suffering. Not every tempest has been stilled as was that which endangered the disciples on Gennesaret. Hagar has sometimes perished in the wilderness, and many an Elijah has gone unfed by the ravens.

What then shall we say to these things?—is there any rule inducible from the data of history concerning the relations of God's special providence to men? A candid study of the records of the past on this subject, will convince us of the truth of two propositions:

1. *God employs, as a rule, the human rather than the superhuman—the natural rather than the supernatural agency, in his dealings with men.*

2. *He always reserves space for his own direct divine operations when special need for them arises.*

There are "diversities of operations" in the sphere of providence and grace; a great variety of means and methods is employed, but it is the "same God who worketh all in all."

First: the Bible itself is witness that what we call divine agency flows more frequently through the *ordinary channels of life, than through the extraordinary.* It is the exception and not the rule, when God employs means that may be called miraculous. Perhaps our first thought may be the reverse of this; we are so accustomed to regard the Scriptures as filled with the record of supernatural events. But consider a moment and you will see that for every miraculous dispensation recorded in the Gospel, there are a multitude of incidents of the natural order. From the time of Abraham to that of Christ, about fifty miracles are reported:—on the average one in a generation. But as matter of fact they were grouped mainly about three far separated points, the calling of the Patriarchs, the giving of the Law, and the mission of the Prophets. Between these epochs long stretches of history appeared, as bare of supernatural events as American history has been.

But special mention is made of the miracles, and all readers notice them particularly. They stand forth like mountains so arresting the eye that we do not gaze beyond them to the valleys and plains of ordinary life. Yet for every sign and wonder performed by Jehovah for his people, there were ten thousand acts of grace and providence by natural means. Few and far between were the miracles which Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Samuel, David saw; but each of those persons stands for an uncounted multitude of faithful souls who never witnessed any-

thing more of the Divine operations than we have seen, if as much. Yet the Holy Spirit was as near and active with men, though by different means, then as now.

As for the New Testament, it must be remembered that the "mighty works" wrought by Christ and his Apostles were confined to a period hardly exceeding thirty years. And even those signs and wonders were always subordinate and incidental to the personal work of the preacher and teacher. For the most part the Gospel was proclaimed and served then just as it is now—by human speech, thought and action, as the agents of God. He has indeed always preferred the human to the superhuman method. He never resorts to the supernatural until the natural can no longer serve him. His favorite instructor in this world is humanity. And why not?—where could the Deity find anything more fitted for his use, than this nature which he created in his own likeness? Even the angels received no such varied endowment as man. The mysterious combination of physical, intellectual and spiritual qualities which we possess, gives to our life a range and versatility of efficiency which is possible to no other of the orders of creation. What spirit from the skies could have lived the long and laborious life of Moses, or have touched humanity at so many points as David? Doubtless no Archangel's mind would have been as good a medium for the inspiration of the New Testament, as that of Paul the Apostle. Even the "Word" which was in the beginning with God and was God, must be "made flesh" and dwell as man among men, in order fully to convey the Gospel to the world.

Let no one then deprecate human agencies in favor of superhuman, or believe that we are now at a disadvan-

tage because the age of miracles is past. Man himself has always been God's favorite instrument in this world, and man remains. It is true that a certain grand preeminence was given to particular men and certain times, in the history of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Prophets and Apostles with their signs and wonders, their infallible authority in teaching, and their mysterious power with the world, remain without parallel in the annals of the church. But we have their own testimony that there is a diversity of gifts and operations by the same Spirit. The whole drift of the Bible is toward the idea that God is not far from everyone of us, and that he requires of everyone his special service.

We believe therefore that there is a sense in which divine inspiration did not cease with the closing of the sacred Canon. Human nature remains, and is still capable of divine use. Indeed human nature is a larger and stronger and better thing today than it ever was before. It ought to be. We, the heirs of all the ages, in the foremost files of time, should be by so much the more fit for the divine use. It is true that we may not claim for any mind now the extraordinary inspiration which once made of Prophet and Apostle infallible authorities. But, this apart, the man of the nineteenth century presents a much broader basis for the Spirit to build upon, than the man of the first century could furnish. Carrying in thought and will the cumulative progress of the past—equipped with mechanical advantages and endowed with scientific skill unknown to any previous age, he has resources at command for the service of the Gospel such as no prophet or apostle ever possessed. Compare Elijah or Paul—the great preachers of the old and the new dispensation, with a modern

preacher whose sermons have reached twenty-five millions of readers every week in all parts of the world, and in respect to the scope and opportunity of their mission at least, we see the immense superiority of the present over the past.

Consider yourself and note how much more you know about God and his government than Noah or Solomon knew. Even Matthew and John did not see in Jesus what we now recognize in him—expounded and illustrated as his character is by the commentary of time. It might be said that even Paul could not have realized the contents of his epistles, as thoroughly as the theologians of the present day may do in the light of so many ages of Christian experience.

The eras of miracles, so-called, were great manifestations of the divine glory to men. But who of us would change places with the tribes in the desert, for the sake of beholding the Pillar of Fire? Who would give up the hymnology of the church as we now have it, for the harp of David? There is not a minister but has in his library today means for the study of divine truth, far greater than all the apostles ever dreamed of. Every Sunday School teacher and scholar may possess a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible, superior to that of any writer of it. With our present means for printing and circulating the Word of God, a child's contribution can send the Gospel further than the Twelve could carry it, with all their miraculous endowments.

If we ask for the direct results of this employment of natural agencies, we find them proportionate to the means used. We may safely compare, *e. g.*, the year 1858 with any year of the Apostolic era, in respect to the territorial

conquests of the Gospel. For during that year the doors were opened by which Christianity found access to one thousand millions of the human race. During it Japan, China, India, the Papal States of Italy, Central Africa, Mexico and the Zenanas of Hindostan, were by treaty rights and personal exertion, made accessible to the Bible—a greater advance in one year than in any previous century of our era. Yet no miracle was performed in help of the truth. For details of these great processes, let anyone study the facts of modern evangelization at home and abroad, and observe the triumphs of the Holy Spirit which they reveal. They are as wonderful as any reported in the Bible. I have no doubt that if a Hebrew historian, accustomed to observing human events from the Divine point of view, were to describe the current facts of Christian progress, he would find the footprints of God upon the sands of time as evident now as in any age of the past. He would see and say that the Holy Spirit is moving men as really now as in the Apostolic times:—there are “diversities of operations,” but it is the “same God who worketh all in all.” And yet all the agencies employed are within the scope of human ability and natural law—so far as man’s observation extends.

Having now seen that God prefers as a rule to employ the ordinary rather than the extraordinary, as a channel for his grace, let us consider the *second proposition*:—*the Almighty always reserves space for His own direct and to us mysterious operations when special need for them arrives.*

It is claimed by many and conceded by some that the age of miracles has passed, never to return. But what is a miracle? The popular idea is that it is an event in violation of natural law, said to have been wrought for religi-

ous purposes. We deny this definition. We do not believe that the Creator would ever permit a violation of the laws of nature; for they are of His own ordination, and are as sacred as the ten commandments. But there may be a new, and to us abnormal, use of natural law. Indeed, who can tell what the entire scope of nature is? We are continually discovering powers and properties of matter, by which the impossible of yesterday becomes the actual of today. If Sir Isaac Newton in the last century had been told that a wire could be stretched across the Atlantic ocean, by which men could talk freely from Europe to America, he would have been justified in declaring it to be miraculous. It was so according to his knowledge of the laws of nature, but not so according to ours. If Moses had published the Hebraic Code in the wilderness by means of a printing press, it would have been to that age a more unaccountable phenomenon than the giving of the Law on Sinai is to us. If the New Testament had reported that Jesus had caused a steamboat to navigate the waters of Gennesaret, the story would have been treated—up to the present century—with just the same wonder or incredulity which is now bestowed on the record of his walking on the water. It appears therefore that the miracle of one age may be the commonplace of another. No one has the right to say that a certain event is impossible because it is contrary to his knowledge of the laws of nature. Human knowledge is perpetually advancing—the incredible of yesterday may be the familiar of today. Why then should we reject as impossible all the signs and wonders of Bible history because they are “contrary to the experience” of men now living? Why might not Jesus of Nazareth (who was confessedly superhuman in

his moral character) have had a superhuman knowledge of the possibilities of matter, which would enable him to deal with it as man could not? Who can tell but that the science of the future may at last arrive at a point of view from which every one of the supernatural events in the Bible, eccentric to the orbit of our present knowledge, will be seen to be concentric to the larger curves of the final philosophy?

Until the contrary is proved, we have the right to assume that the miracles of Scripture were not violations of the real order of nature. They were simply a result of the higher use of the creation by the Creator, for his own special purposes. And it follows that such interference with the ordinary course of events is still possible and may continue to be.

We have already learned from human experience that the universe is not a rigid mechanism, in which we are caged and confined to one sequence of cause and effect. It is an infinitely elastic and versatile system of material conditions, corresponding to our own ever-expanding powers. And as nature finds room for all the innovations and even the derangements of restless human endeavor, without loss of its integrity, may it not give place to the touch of divine wisdom also? If a genius can do new and unthought of things with matter, could not the God-man do more? This world was not the same world after Columbus or Watt or Morse had passed through it. Why then doubt that the Christ left his impress large and wonderful on the plastic surface of the earth? It would have been utterly unaccountable if such a life as that of Immanuel, had not been attended by supernatural phenomena. As to the actual occurrence of events unaccountable

by natural causation, we may appeal with confidence to the facts of religious experience past and present. The records of prayer abound in them. Christian faith is all the time recalling the stories of Elijah, Peter and Paul. A father prays earnestly for the conversion of a son in a distant city, and receives a letter soon afterward, describing his son's conversion on that very day. A family in need of food and clothing appeal to God for help, and relief comes at just the time and of the exact nature desired. A spiritual believer is given up to die by the physician, and is prepared and ready to depart; when, suddenly filled with an intense desire to live for the glory of God, she prays for a restoration to health; and at once she is healed—fully and finally delivered from the fatal disease. These are authenticated instances taken from the numberless testimonies of actual life to the reality of the power and willingness of God to answer prayer in ways mysterious to man. According to the course of this world they are miracles, and we believe them to be such; at the same time we contend that in no case is the real order of nature violated. The Creator is merely interfering in his creation—using natural means in a supernatural way.

Of course this belief is liable to perversion. It has already been carried to extremes by the Roman Catholic, with his miraculous cures effected by relics and shrines; and also by those who have made the Faith Cure and Christian Science a disturbing element in the church. But let not the errors of fanaticism drive us to the opposite extreme of skepticism. Great and grave caution is to be exercised in our treatment of every case of supernatural working. We must guard against mistaking the myster-

ious for the miraculous—or taking a temporary effect for a permanent result, or confounding the psychical with the spiritual. Above all, we must avoid the error (so common and pernicious) of believing that a certain cure effected by direct divine interposition, would justify us in renouncing scientific aid in all cases, and depending upon prayer and faith alone. This is sheer presumption ;—as unfounded as the idea that the mysterious conversion of Saul of Tarsus is a specimen of all the operations of grace; and that for the conversion of souls we are to rely on nothing but the divine agency. No, the place of human freedom and responsibility, the use of the appropriate means with which the Creator has stored this world like a great Pharmacy, must ever be kept in mind by us. To do otherwise is to dishonor the Creator and his laws.

But, after all due allowance is made for secondary causes, let us not stop short with them, as so many seem to do. Place for man!—place for nature!—place for law and force and life! Yes; but ah, leave room for God as well!—for the mighty, the mysterious One—for him who toucheth the hills and they smoke and who taketh up the isles as a very little thing. Do not rule Him out of His own creation. Beware of a materialized religion which limits itself to the small range of things seen and temporal! Beware of a faith which ties its own hands and stops its own mouth, with respect to the promises and prophecies of grace!

Our time needs nothing more than a rational supernaturalism. The scientific drift of modern thought is carrying even the Christian away from the privilege of spiritual discernment, and lessening his power of apprehension, so that the radius of his vision is shortened, and the hori-

zon of his moral view is contracted to the scope of time and space. He is no longer able to "look not at the the things that are seen but at those that are not seen" by mortal sense. Such is one of the effects of

"This age that blots out life with question marks,—
And moves far off the heaven
So neighborly with men of old,
To voids sparse sown with alienated stars,"

How common it is to find the old fashioned ideas of prayer and providence, alien and difficult to the new generation! This is a great and deplorable defect in the religion of our time. It is earnest, aggressive, scientific, philosophical; but its ability runs along the lines of natural causation too much. How seldom do we see the eagle of apostolic Spirituality flying straight into the empyrean! A true supernaturalism is perfectly consistent with a proper regard for natural law. Nature and Grace never conflict, for they are the children of one Father. There is room and need in the economy of the church for all that genuine science can furnish of knowledge and skill. We are as bound to obey the laws of matter as of spirit.

Nor need we be deterred by those perversions with which the adversary always tries to defeat the Truth with its own counterfeit. We have but to recall the provisions made for all such emergencies by the inspired word. "Believe not every spirit but prove the spirits whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God." Here is an infallible criterion by which the true can always be distinguished from the false in the new

signs and wonders which are presented for credence. We ask in every case, "What is the actual result on life and character of this theory or practice? Does it lead men to Christ and make them more like him? Does it strengthen his church, increase a reverence for his word and promote his kingdom?" Let this simple test be applied to the phenomena of religious novelties, and their true character will be easily exposé. We should be afraid of nothing, however startling, which glorifies our blessed Lord: we must fear everything, however attractive, which detracts from his honor.

To this end the great need of the church is the presence of that Illuminator, whom the Savior left in the world to bear witness of himself. O for the domination of the Holy Spirit! for a revival of that primitive piety which made of every soul a "habitation of God through the Spirit!" There could be no chance for deception with those who walked in the Spirit and were filled with the Spirit. Then would be restored the wonders of those times when the Spirit was poured out upon all flesh.

Why go far back through the ages to find the Lord who may be walking by our side today? Why cross the seas to visit Palestine, when our own life may be a Holy Land, with its Bethlehem and Calvary and Olivet?

"In our familiar places the Mounts of God are found;
His sky the world embraces and makes it holy ground;
The heart that loves and trusts and sings,
Hears everywhere the rush of angel wings."

II.

TRUTH IN JESUS.

"As truth is, in Jesus."—EPH. 4:21.

“TRUTH” is one thing; truth “in Jesus” may be quite another. We know the consequences of removing anything from its natural place. To put an object in the midst of uncongenial surroundings, is to do it an injury. A diamond would not shine as brightly in a setting of lead as in one of gold. A rose will not flourish in the sand. An eagle will pine away in a cage. Environment must correspond to endowment, or both will suffer by comparison. In like manner truth of any kind has its habitat or range, apart from which it is not itself. Any proposition—except perhaps the axioms of mathematics—must be conditioned. That government should be of the people, by the people and for the people, is true in the United States but not in Turkey. Herein is often the essence of successful falsehood. No lie is so powerful as a truth taken out of its connections. You can prove any heresy out of the Bible, by quoting detached passages without reference to their context.

This distinction is to be noted between the “truth,” and “truth in Jesus.” By “truth” the New Testament means all that can be covered by that name—of things temporal and eternal, human and divine, material and immaterial. Whatever things are true, beautiful and good, are related to the Son of God as to their original conditioning element. They cannot therefore be fully and

fairly regarded apart from him. To neglect this relationship in our treatment of them, is to be in danger of falsifying them. Let no one object to this view as extreme or fanciful; it is the plain teaching of revelation. For just as it is certain that the creation cannot be viewed aright apart from the Creator, "in whom we live, move and have our being," it is equally true that everything is involved in the sphere and government of Christ, "who is the image of the invisible God: for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible; all things have been created through him and unto him; and he is before all things and in him all things hold together."

This is the inspired description of truth and its relationships. It is all "in Jesus." Not more certainly is the sun the centre and source of the solar system, all of whose planets are derived from it and sustained by it, than is Christ the Creator and Ruler of the moral universe. And just as the old astronomy which made of the earth the central point around which the heavens revolve, gave to men a false point of view which threw all their ideas about nature into confusion; so does any scheme of religious thought which regards nature or human nature as supreme, derange the entire system of morality. Men did not know the world or the planets perfectly, until they had given to the sun its parental and regnant place. Nor can they know anything truly about life and its interests, until they put Christ where the Bible puts him, as "head over all things." We need a Copernican astronomy in morals as in physics, which will tell us that "in Him all things hold together." Otherwise there will be chaos in place of cosmos. If we regard Nature or Self as the axis

of thought, about which all our ideas of duty and destiny revolve, we simply go back to the Ptolemaic theory with its errors and confusions. Everything is inverted. The less becomes the greater, the part rules the whole. Dislocations and disorder fill the present, and as for the future there can be no resolution of its problems. We see nothing but

“Time a maniac scattering dust,
And Life a Fury slinging flame.”

It is not enough therefore that we have “truth.” We must have it “in Jesus.” No matter what our stores of knowledge, our gleanings from the harvest fields of history, nature and life; unless we have gathered them all and hold them all with due reference to their divine derivation, we are still ignorant of their deepest meaning and highest character. “In Him all things consist”—they hold together by the principle of cohesion which gives them true unity. If the Son of God were to be withdrawn from the universe, it would be like paralyzing the gravitation which binds sun and satellite together.

Taking now our stand at this true centre of life and being, let us look along some of the radii which diverge from it.

i. *Consider the truth which nature presents to us.* If there is anything which the present age takes pride in, it is in its superior knowledge of nature. We possess so much more of truth than was ever known before;—truth dredged from the depths, and brought down from the heights; truth gathered far and wide; truth minute and vast, simple and complex; truth physical and intellectual and moral. This truth is not conjectured or uncertain, but established by observation and experience. This truth is

systematized and organized into great departments of learning which are useful, benign, and ever enlarging. We cannot be too grateful for the power and wisdom and happiness, which the truth about nature has bestowed on us.

But is this great gift complete and satisfactory? We ask simple and elementary questions—such as “what is the cause of truth itself?—how came it to be what it is?” and are told that science has nothing to do with the origin of things. We inquire about the secret of life in bud or seed, germ or cell, and receive no reply. We ask for the whence and whither of life, and obtain no answer. We inquire for the sustaining power—the secret source of energy—the explanation of law and order—the meaning of our own complex needs and capacities, and are left in utter darkness.

Then the Bible speaks, and reveals to us the truth “in Jesus.” It reveals One who by his own word arrested the stormy wind and reduced it to calm; who so far overruled natural laws as to transmute water instantly into wine and the few loaves to many; who laid his hand upon sickness and replaced it with health; who changed malformation into perfectness, and called back the dead to life. These were the frequent and facile works of Jesus of Nazareth; and they teach us that Nature is not Fate, but that it is wholly within the scope and authority of a Personal will—an Intelligence who is its author and its regulator. Here is the cause of causes, the life of life, in the truth about nature as it is “in Jesus.”

Do you see the difference? The truth alone gives you this world and nothing more. It forbids you to pray for help in your extremity, for there is no one to pray to—nothing but cause and effect. It prevents all trust in a

supreme Providence of intellectual and affectional power, for there is no place left for such an element. It pauses at the grave and sees nothing beyond it. It never answers the questions—"If a man die shall he live again?"—or "how shall man be just with God?" That is as far as truth can go.

But truth restored to its native element and conditioned with its divine connections, is an Angel of Revelation. How quick and comforting its responses! Pray? "ask and ye shall receive;" Providence? "The hairs of your head are numbered" by him who clothes the lilies and feeds the sparrows; Death? "I am the resurrection and the life;" the Hereafter? "I go to prepare a place for you;" Sin and its desert? "The Son of Man is come to seek that which was lost." What a contrast between these two presentations of truth!—Nature in the one case is a statue, noble and beautiful, but irresponsible to our appeal. In the other it is animated and imbued with a divine personality, which more than answers to our needs. How then can there be a conflict between science and religion? Religion supplies what science lacks to make its theories and systems complete.

2. Consider the application of this to the *Study of History*. The usual method of looking at the events of the past is to view them in the light of nature and human nature alone. There have been only these two factors in the problems of time, and everything is to be construed by reference to them. It is the evolution of type—it is the survival of the fittest and the working of natural selection, which accounts for all the incidents of human progress. Here is Truth perhaps, but is it the whole Truth? This theory does not explain all of the phenom-

ena of history. It does not account for the presence among all the races, of traditions of a once perfect state ; that man began in a lofty and not a lowly moral condition, and has fallen, not risen, from his original point : nor does it show why it is that men have everywhere hopes and ideals that point forward to a restoration of their lost perfectness. It does not account for the fact that in every age and land, souls have appeared and lives have been lived, which were out of all keeping with their environment ; minds that were not the mere product of their antecedents, lives that heralded the future, and showed the presence in the world of some Power for which nature and life could not account. How can Evolution account for a Moses or a Socrates, a Paul or a Carey ?

Such things are unaccountable until the truth of history "in Jesus" throws light on the problem. According to the Bible, the Son of God has been present in human history from the first, leading men forward by a system of moral discipline toward the point of his advent ; and since then conducting them with reference to the supply of their needs by the Gospel. Take your stand on Calvary and you have a point of view which commands the entire horizon of this world's history. Looking backward you see all the lines of ancient time converging toward the atonement as their consummation ; gazing forward, you see all the lines of progress radiating from that focal point. And thus the medley and maze of events resolves itself into an orderly plan of divine-human meaning ; like that labyrinth, constructed by a landscape gardener, which defied all observation except from one point, where the observer found the clue to its mysteries.

Carlyle said to Emerson as they were walking the

hills of Northumberland one day, "Christ died; that brought you and me together." He meant that as a critical student of history, he had found that the atonement is its unifying principle. Von Müller, an eminent German historian, wrote—"Since I have known the Savior everything is plain; with him there is nothing I cannot solve." He meant that the words of the Lord Jesus "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life," were true for the philosopher as well as the christian. The truth "in Jesus" is the whole truth about time, not less than about eternity. It is the Sun of Righteousness which rises over the horizon of the ages, and illuminates all the fields and avenues of the past, present and future, with divine radiance. It was with this great truth in mind that Henry Dunster, (1638), the first President of the first college in America, laid down this maxim among his published rules—"let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well, that the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life; and therefore to lay Christ at the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning."

3. We should look at *spiritual and divine truth* through the medium of this principle. This is the testimony of one who had received a religious education of a certain kind:—"I can make nothing of the Bible as a rule for my faith and practice. It tells me of a Being too mysterious to be comprehended by me, too holy to be approached by me, too just to have any sympathy with me. And then it commands me to worship this Being whom no man hath seen or can see, obey Him when I can understand nothing about Him, and love Him when I

have reason to fear Him. This I cannot do. It affronts my reason, and arouses all of the antagonism of my moral nature." So spake an intelligent, true hearted man ; and we cannot wonder at his position. For if it is true that the Bible exacts of us what we are not able to perform ; if it sets before us a conception of God and our relations to Him which affronts our innate sense of what is just and fitting, then human nature may rightly claim exemption from such a burden as too heavy to be borne.

But this is not the case. The trouble with this objector was that he had received the truth about heaven and earth, but not the truth "in Jesus." Nor could he get anything but a partial and imperfect view of divine realities, until he gazed upon them through the medium of Christ and his cause. For what saith the word? "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Yes, it is only as we look upon Jesus that we can grasp the fullness of divine truth. For He is God manifest in the flesh—the infinite translated into the terms of the finite, the eternal compressed into the limits of the temporal.

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," was the benign assurance of Jesus. And O what an idea we obtain of God when we see Him "in the face of Jesus Christ!" He is not a remote and inaccessible Majesty, dwelling in light whom no man hath seen or can see. He is "Our Father," who feeds the sparrows, and clothes the lilies, and how much more, you ! God is not a stern Judge presiding at the bar of criminal trial. He so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son to save all who will accept Him. There is no iron code of impossi-

ble commandments laid upon us ; the simple law of grace is "believe and live." We are not required to attain unto the divine perfectness in order to share the divine favor, for "God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in his Son ; he that hath the Son hath the life, he that hath not the Son hath not the life."

Behold the difference between the truth about God and that truth "in Jesus." The one is abstract, vague and incomprehensible ; the other is concrete, personal, and even a child can grasp it. The one may be severe in its exactations, terrible in its exposures, confounding in its consequences ; the other is mild and gracious as love, sweet and helpful as pity. This was the testimony of those who saw the word that was made flesh and dwelt among men; they beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father and it was full of grace and truth. O well for us that we live under the same dispensation ! The light of the knowledge of the glory of God does not come to us through the dense and distorting medium of nature, nor through the burning-glass of the Law which focalizes truth to a fiery point of application. No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, and he has told us that "God is Love."

From these propositions certain corollaries follow which deserve attention.

First: All those who are concerned in the spread of the Gospel should remember the distinction between Truth, and Truth "in Jesus." It will account for many of the failures of the christian preacher or teacher, that he has made so much of the one and so little of the other. We have told men the truth about sin and salvation, about

heaven and earth, God and man. And yet how little has resulted of personal conversion! What is the reason, we often ask with pain. It may be that all that truth so clearly presented was not "in Jesus." We did not so present it that men saw him and felt him through it. If so we have been giving moonlight to the world instead of sunshine. For moonlight is sunshine, but at second hand; and all of the vitalizing power of the solar ray is lost when it comes to us via the moon. Even so the preaching of the Gospel may be an indirect shining of the Sun of Righteousness, because it reaches men through the medium of human philosophies and systems. But however beautiful and welcome such instruction may be, it is never the "power of God unto Salvation;" for it lacks the element of a personal Savior, addressing human hearts. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," said Jesus. It is only by such a showing forth of his truth as will make men feel his presence, that they can be saved. "God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath the life, he that hath not the Son hath not the life."

Nor let any one think that to "preach Jesus" is to be confined to a narrow theme, or a subject interesting only to spiritual believers. For if it is true that "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," it follows that a full and worthy proclamation of Christ would involve all that is true, beautiful and good. The fact is that our ordinary dealing with the "truth in Jesus" touches but one of the sides of his infinite fullness; nor can we ever do justice to the manifold grace of God until we show the relations of all kinds of truth to it. Art needs the rays of the Sun of Righteousness to display its

brightest lustre. Science waits for Christ to lead it into the mysteries of the universe. Philosophy will never be complete nor Political Economy satisfied, until they accept the ministry of his Spirit whose office is to "guide you into all the truth."

Second: There can be no such fidelity to his truth, except by those who are identified with his person. We must ourselves be "in Jesus" if we would properly use his truth, according as he said, "Abide in me and I in you; without me ye can do nothing." What wondrous words are these—"in Christ!" They describe the very sphere of God's glory and the entire range of man's perfection. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; and if any man be in Christ he is a new creature and all things are of God to him. In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power. In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

Are we out of Christ or in Christ today? The answer to that question will locate us on the right hand or the left of the Judge at the decisions of eternal destiny.

III.

THE GEMS OF GOD.

"Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."—REV. 21:11.

WHAT more appropriate emblem of spiritual purity and beauty could be found, than is furnished by the gem? The mineral kingdom ministers to our use in the soils, rocks and ores of earth. But its final gift is the crystal—that strange flower of the under world. For purposes of ornamentation, nothing can exceed these blossoms of the rocks. Even the bloom of the garden and the tree, flush of rose and wealth of fruit, pale beside the luster of the diamond and the ruby's fire. Gold and silver are precious, iron and copper are valuable, granite and slate are useful. But the gem has always been supreme in the honors of men.

As such the Bible accepts and uses this rare and radiant thing. The symbolism of precious stones is among the most salient features of Scripture teaching, in those object lessons which are so vivid on the sacred page. The High Priest's breastplate, *e. g.*—derived its glorious significance from the twelve jewels which glowed and sparkled from the golden square. Each of these stones was engraved with the name of one of the twelve tribes; and thus as the High Priest presented himself in his full regalia before the Mercy Seat, he offered on his heart the peo-

ple themselves as a sacrifice to the Lord. Two large onyx stones were on his shoulders, graven each with the names of six of the tribes. What a picture of intercession—as the consecrated emerald and jasper, and sapphire, and amethyst, and jacinth, shot their tinted rays through the clouds of incense, and burned their colored fires! They were the pictured adoration of Judah and Benjamin and Reuben and Gad. And surely no other production of earth could so justly symbolize the offerings of prayer and praise! Nor can we find any other type of the Apostle and High Priest of our profession more gloriously beautiful than this—as He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

“The names of all his saints he bears
Deep graven on his heart :
Nor shall the meanest christian say
That he has lost a part.”

It is in perfect accord with this brilliant typology of the Old Testament, that the New closes with a picture more brilliant still. It is that of the City of Consummation whose glory caps the climax of Time's progress. Far away we see it shining at the end of our earthly vistas—a supreme and splendid spectacle. The city itself is of gold—blazing in the light; but the walls are of jasper, and the foundations of precious stones—twelve layers of jeweled beauty. Each of these tiers is graven with the name of one of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, that so the new Israel may glow in the presence of God, as ancient Israel shone before him. A type—an emblem only? Yes, but how radiantly significant—how wondrously true!

How could the beauty of sanctified character, the final glory of saved souls, their exceeding preciousness in the Redeemer's sight, be so fitly set forth as by that picture

of a city sparkling with the rainbow tints of crystallized light and loveliness? Inspiration seems to have exhausted the imagery of nature in its effort to portray the wonders and splendors of grace. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted; behold I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and thy foundations with sapphires; and will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones."

Let us then consider the gem, which is the crown of the inanimate world, as a type of humanity's consummation. For as the jewel represents dull opaque matter so refined as to be akin to ethereal perfectness, so does regeneration sublimize the sinful soul into a state heavenly and godlike. Study this paralellism closely.

i. The precious stone is found in the depths of the earth. Not on the surface or the heights, do men look for the emerald or the sapphire, but down in the darkness of the soil or the mine. It is true that the rivers sometimes scatter brilliants along their shores, but only by transfer. The home of the gem is hidden in the secrecy of the rocks. It must be sought for, diligently and painfully. And it is significant that the most precious stones are found in regions furthest from civilization. Far away in the wilds of tropic or barbarous countries, Nature has hidden her best treasures, as though to set the greatest price on their discovery. Life and health must be jeopardized by the gem-seeker. The African diamond fields, the Burman ruby mines, the Siberian mountains, are like vaults locked and barred against the hand of man. The Pearl (called a gem, although not of mineral origin) has been secreted in the depths of the sea, only to be reached at great peril.

Herein we find a picture of the home or birthplace of human perfections. The jewels of God are never discovered on the high places of pride and power. They do not lie on the surface of life like the stones of utility, the flowers and fruits of pleasure. The virtues of character—purity, truth, humility and love—must be searched for in the depths of self-denial, toil and trouble. Down amid the hard rigors of ill-fortune and want, are born the great qualities of humanity. There Joseph, and Moses, and David were found. There the Apostles were discovered. Yea, the most glorious jewel in the crown of God was plucked out of the abyss of Calvary's shame. This is the law of nature and also of grace. If it is accepted in the one case, ought it to be rejected in the other? No one thinks of complaining because amethysts are found only in difficult places and at great cost. Shall we then object if faith, hope and love do not lie ready for our hand, but must be searched for and acquired through much tribulation?

2. *Precious stones are composed of common, even base elements.* Many of them, the ruby, topaz, sapphire, consist merely of crystalized aluminum, (a component of clay) and owe their resplendent colors merely to an infusion of different metallic oxides. The imperial diamond is only the sublimized form of charcoal. The opal is glorified sand. Indeed, the jewels that glitter in the regalia of a queen, have the same ultimate origin with the stones that lie beneath her feet in the road.

In this respect also they symbolize to us the material out of which divine grace erects its triumphs. Human degredation is the quarry where God finds the substance of his temple. It is the sinful, the unclean and con-

demned that form the base of his operations. What more unworthy than the fickle Peter or the doubting Thomas? And yet the foundations of the New Jeruselem bear the names of the twelve Apostles. How far away, apparently from all heavenly use, was Saul the persecutor! Nevertheless his life shines resplendent in the diadem of the Redeemer. And when we see Augustin the corrupt, Bunyan the profane, Newton the abandoned, and Gough the dissipated, rescued and transformed into moral strength and beauty, we should take heart for the present and the future. The same process is going on in us and around us all the time. Despise not one of these little ones; but have faith that the lowly and base elements of society may be purified and beautified into prismatic virtues of character.

3. A degree of mystery always attaches to the formation of the precious stone. Who can describe the manner, in which the particles of matter are changed from a coarse opaque condition, into these translucent forms? No eye has ever followed the carbon crystallize into a diamond or traced the transition of silica into an opal. Silent and secret, in the depths of the earth, a mystic chemistry wrought out these strange metamorphoses. The fairy flowers of the under world blossomed without help of air or sunshine. When we lift them from their home in the darkness and prepare them to shine like solid light, nature's lips are closed as to their birth and growth.

But so is spiritual development a mystery. We see the results of regeneration, but never the origin and process of the new birth. "The wind bloweth where it listeth and we hear the sound thereof, but know not whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of

the Spirit." The renewed soul is the visible effect of an invisible cause. What alchemy is it that transmutes hatred into love, an enemy of Christ into his friend? How does impurity give place to holiness, and ignorance and error produce the philosopher's stone of wisdom? The believer himself cannot analyze or describe the transformation which he has felt. Conscious of the exercises of repentance and faith, he is totally unable to explain the radical changes of nature which followed. Every conversion is a miracle. But this is not to its discredit. For who refuses the sapphire's celestial blue or the crysolite's golden gleam because of their unaccountable origin? We never lose faith in nature because of its mysteries.

But while the exact method of producing precious stone in the laboratory of nature is obscure, certain general principles of the process are well known. E. g.—Crystallization is always the result of slow and difficult operations. The gem that we admire so much, was born perhaps of fiery convulsion in the depths of the earth. The diamond represents a gaseous agony; the ruby drew its blood red gleam from elemental war. If the brilliants in the diadem of royalty could tell the story of their generation, they would speak of earth's travail and electric woe. But not more so than do human virtues testify to the cost of their production. The graces that shine on the crest of character, life's chief decorations, are always the result of spiritual trials. Patience, humility, love and purity are born of self-sacrifice and pain. The mystic laboratory of sorrow has produced the richest gems yet known to human history, as the great African diamond mines are found to be contained within the craters of extinct volcanoes. What is the pearl but a crystallized tear?

The most beautiful sympathy shines over a wounded spirit and a broken heart.

4. *The formation of precious stones exhibits evidence of intelligent and beneficent design.* The science of crystallography is complex and difficult, but it reveals a wonderful mathematics as ruling the origin of the rocks. When the particles of any particular mineral combine, they do so after unvarying patterns of geometric order. Their shapes are constant for the same kind of substance. On straight lines, in smooth planes, or in solids of particular angles and exact facets, chemistry marshals its minute arrays with military precision. The tourmaline forms in three sided prisms, quartz in pyramidal shapes, mica in sheets, the beryl in six sided figures, the topaz in rhombic prisms, etc. Always the plane, the angle is the same for each kind of mineral, as our most exact mathematics will testify. Thus under the glow and glisten of the lady's jewelry, worn perhaps with mere pleasure or pride, there is a Reign of Law as rigid and majestic as that which binds the starry gems upon the sable brow of night.

Now if mind is required to even understand the crystal, was not mind needed to produce it? If our keenest science has been tested in investigating the secrets of the mineral world, can we believe that no intelligence was concerned in their origination? Surely if the mathematical beauty of the precious stone reflecting the light from polished facet with a new splendor, testifies to us of the power and wisdom and beneficence of the Creator, not less should be said of the gems that burn on the breastplate of our High Priest, as he presents the fruits of salvation before the great white throne. Indeed the rescue of the soul from degradation and its restoration to celestial honor,

indicate a far greater exercise of the divine attributes than any of the features of the material creation.

5. *The precious stone needs the help of art in order to reach its perfectness for human use.* As it comes from its home in the soil or the rocks, the crystal often exhibits blemishes of form or surface which require correction. Not until the lapidary subjects it to a process of cleansing or cutting, will it reveal its full power of color and radiance. This operation is a long and laborious one—so difficult that until lately there was but one place in the world, Amsterdam, where the skilled labor which it requires, could be found. Months of slow and delicate attrition may be spent in giving to one stone the shape and surface which are necessary. But when the new facets are developed, the reward is seen in an increase of brilliancy, perhaps a total change of the beauty and value of the stone.

It is in a similar manner that God fashions the jewels of His choice. Not enough that virtues should be produced by the mysterious chemistry of moral ordeals;—not enough that faith, hope and love are born in the soul through its trials. These qualities must be still further developed in order to reach their highest use. And O that process of the great Lapidary, by which human character is subjected to the pressure and grinding friction of want, defeat and pain! how often the poor life tires and faints under such a discipline! But patience! wait for the result; and see how the soul that has been exercised by these chastenings, shines forth as a new creation, reflecting the glory of the Highest on the world. Thus does the precious stone become a gem, fit for the signet ring or the tiara. Its privations have only given it new facets of luster, as the Kohinoor diamond, pride of the British crown,

lost nearly a fourth of its original size before it reached the sun-like splendor for which it is now noted.

"Despise not therefore the chastening of the Lord," for it is by such means that the gems of God are cut and polished into the sparkling brilliants of grace. There is a gain in every loss, a compensation in all affliction under the divine hand. Though not joyous but grievous at present—afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto such as are exercised thereby.

6. *The precious stone suggests the difference between the genuine and the counterfeit.* Few objects of value have been imitated so often and successfully as the gem. The esteem in which it is held and the universal demand for its beauty, have always led to spurious productions in its name. Artificial stones of all kinds, colors, and sizes, abound. To such an extent is this art carried, that none but an expert can detect the difference between the brilliant paste and the real diamond. The most gorgeous display of jewelry that I ever saw, one which held me spell-bound by its attractiveness, proved to be a collection of artificial gems—cheap in price and of no real value.

But alas for human nature!—the same may be said of all its excellences. Virtues of every kind have been simulated again and again. Since the days of Judas hypocrisy has been common and successful. There is a false church wearing the robes of the Bride. The crucifix takes the place of the Cross, and Christ is obscured by Anti-Christ. Truth, honor, humility, love have been imitated so often by error and evil, that we must be on our guard unceasingly:—Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, to deceive if possible the very elect.

But woe to those who are so beguiled as to "believe

a lie!" What more acute shame than that of the lady who, after wearing a radiant brooch with pride, discovered after a time that its brilliancy was fading, its colors dying out into the poor dull thing which it really was!—that she had been rejoicing in a costly sham and parading a miserable fraud! But what is that compared with the agony which the soul will feel, when after a life perhaps of sincere but false religion, it discovers, as it surely will, that its trust has been misplaced? It has been making a show that had no substance to justify it, taking pride in a beauty that was perishable and a wealth that was unreal! O the "shame and everlasting contempt" that await those who present themselves at the marriage supper of the Lamb in what proves to be the imitation jewelry of false adornment! They will be rejected then, for nothing shall enter the Holy City that "defileth or maketh a lie." All is true and pure in heaven. The jasper and chalcedony and sardonyx of the celestial foundations are not artificial gems.

And if it is asked how we can distinguish now between the true and the false in moral character, in order to stand the final tests of destiny, there is but one answer. Experts have many means of detection, but there is one which is indispensable—comparison with the genuine. The real brilliant cannot fail to disclose the imposture of a false rival. Even so: and we have but to judge all things in the light of Him who is the Light of Life, to have the means at once of infallible moral judgment. He is the Power of God and Wisdom of God. No lie can live in his presence. The spangles of worldliness may shine in the gas light, and the trinkets of time look brave on the stage of self-display; but out in the daylight of the Sun

of Righteousness, they are sure to fade into the cheap tinsel of theatrical show. O you that are spending your heart's wealth now for the gems you hope to wear in eternity, be wise with the wisdom that is in Christ.

“They shall be mine saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels.” This is a description, unequaled elsewhere in the Bible, of the Christian’s future. In the last great day of disclosure, when the Son of God shall come in great glory, to be invested with the honors of recognized authority, and be crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords, then when he is enthroned and sceptered, what will be the chief ornament of his royal regalia? “He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in them that believe.” They will be his crown jewels—the souls that he has saved, having purchased them with his blood, the redeemed of the Lord who are the trophies of his love. For then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of his father, and everyone of them will be to the praise of the glory of his grace. “They shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels.” When the signet ring is placed on his hand, and the coronet on his brow, and the insignia of the divine “Order of Merit” on his breast, then will his greatest pride and joy be seen in the people whom he hath saved out of every nation and country and tongue.

Therefore let them so regard themselves now. Let them beware of all base uses and low connections. Let them so live as those who are “a peculiar people” reserved for the most exalted destiny. Shall the Bride of the Lamb consort with anyone who is unworthy of her high calling? Ought not the Christian to remember that “the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his

peculiar treasure?" And if our religious experience is one of chastening and pain, and the hand of Providence bears heavily on the life, let us bear in mind the necessary process through which the precious stone becomes a gem. Rarely ever is the crystal ready at once for its place as a jewel. It must be subjected, as has been said, to a laborious course of transformation. But this rule is even more binding in grace than in nature. Human souls are less fit for heaven's uses than earth's treasures, until they have been purified and reconstructed. And for this process, the appointed means and method are found in the disciplinary ordeals of Providence. Wherever souls are born again of the travail of the Holy Spirit, there God is finding his jewels. Wherever they are enduring his education and discipline, he is fashioning his jewels. Wherever they are being gathered by death to himself, he is selecting and arranging his jewels.

Let then patience have its perfect work! Shall the clay say to the potter, what doest thou? The divine Lapidary knows just what form will best elicit the peculiar beauty of each particular gem. He knows what facet and what angle your nature needs to give it the most reflecting power. O for patience on our part and sweet submission! yea that glad acquiescence which cooperates with the divine treatment and makes it part of our self-culture! So will character be developed into the pearl of purity, the ruby of zeal, the emerald of humility, the sapphire of faith, the amethyst of hope, the diamond of love. And then in the day when he makes up his jewels, thou shalt also be "a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God."

IV. STEPHEN.

"Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost."—Acts 6:5.

THIS is the brief but glorious epitaph which commemo-
rates one of the heroes of the New Testament. And where on the rolls of fame, on any of the proud tablets which keep alive the names of men upon the walls of history, shall we find a nobler inscription than this—"a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost?" Certainly christian history shows nothing more illustrious. In some respects the name of Stephen shines next to that of the Head of the Church, in the value of his services to the Kingdom of Heaven, and in the glory of his reward. This will appear from the story of his life and death.

In the book of Acts Stephen is mentioned as one of the Grecians or Hellenists. This name was given to some of the Jews of the Dispersion—Hebrews who lived outside of Palestine, but who still retained their ancestral faith. Of these the number was very great at that time. Jerusalem was not only the capital city of Judea, it was a metropolis of world-wide influence. Its children were scattered throughout the Roman Empire and had thus become the means of leavening the civilized world with divine truth. For the same reason, all parts of the earth were represented in the great multitudes who came to the yearly festivals of the Jewish church "out of every nation under heaven." Stephen was a Jew who had been born

or reared in Greece. He had received his education in the classic land of Hellas, where he had breathed the air still musical with the poetry of Homer, the philosophy of Plato and the wisdom of Socrates. The grand shadow of the Parthenon perhaps had fallen on his youth, and the noble inspirations of Athenian art had liberalized his thought. But he was a child of Abraham at heart, and had preserved his patrimony of religious zeal, with the fidelity which has characterized his race to the present day. The Jew is still a cosmopolite ; but never has he merged his racial traits in those of any other people, or lost his hold on the covenant blessing of Israel.

We are not told how long Stephen had been a resident of Jerusalem, or when he accepted the faith of Jesus of Nazareth. But evidently he was among those whom the day of Pentecost developed as believers in the crucified. The terms by which he is introduced to history—"a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost"—attach him at once to that tremendous affusion of the spirit, when the wind and the fire made known his presence, and "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The shock and splendor of that miraculous cataclysm ushered in a New Era. Then was born the Dispensation foretold of old, with signs and great wonders. The disciples became Apostles—bold and ready—endowed with the gift of tongues and infallible knowledge. Then the preaching of the Gospel was "in demonstration of the spirit and of power." Peter, "filled with the Holy Ghost," tells the multitude to repent and be baptized unto the remission of sins, and they too shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. This was done ; and three thousand were added to the church, of whom it is written "they were all filled with the Holy

Ghost." This phrase was indeed the motto of the infant church. Again and again it occurs in the Book of Acts, describing not only the Apostles but the entire membership; every believer was "full of the Holy Ghost," and "great grace was upon them all."

But soon practical difficulties began to appear, in the organization and conduct of the new enterprise; among which was the care of its feebler members—the poor, sick and aged. This burden was one of the sacred trusts which the Redeemer had committed to his followers, and which the Apostles were prompt to assume. But in the discharge of this duty it became evident that an equitable distribution of the charitable fund required more attention than they were able to bestow on it. The foreign born Jews complained that their "widows"—(a class characterized by special needs, since by oriental custom women whose husbands had died, might not support themselves or marry again) did not receive as large an allotment as those among the natives. In order to provide for this emergency, the Twelve decided to appoint a committee outside their own number, since it was not in their province to leave the preaching of the Word and "serve tables" (preside at the love-feast or sacrament, which was then administered daily, and where the poor fund was distributed.) Wherefore they said to the congregation of believers, "Brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word."

This order was obeyed. "The saying pleased the people and they chose Stephen, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, the pros-

elyte of Antioch ; whom they set before the Apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." Thus appears for the first time in the church the office of " Deacon"—a name signifying originally a messenger, a servant ; hence one who served at the tables, and became under the Apostles a distributor of the alms, and administrator of the temporal affairs of the society. These men were all apparently of the foreign born Jews, but the first named was evidently chief among them. Stephen is the only one described as to his character and efficiency ; we know hardly anything about the others.

He must have been a man of extraordinary endowments, both by nature and grace; for it is written of him that he was active and useful beyond the range of his functions in the diaconate. " Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." He became in fact a lay-Apostle, if the term may be used. Without the special commission which dignified the Twelve, he entered into their work of public proclamation of the truth, illustrating and demonstrating it with supernatural phenomena. This was the great and glorious achievement of the new deacon ; and for a time he was one of the most popular preachers of the Gospel in Jerusalem. For then, as now, a peculiar interest attached in the public mind to those who spoke outside the ranks of the official orators. The lay-preacher is often more successful with the masses than the professionals, because of his freedom from their restraints. For which reason the church should always find a place for the unordained minister of the Word, whom the spirit selects among the commonalty. Laymen can find a field and do a work for Christ, which the regular pulpit does not reach.

This was the province which deacon Stephen occupied, and in which he met with great success, and also much trial and danger. For he differed in some respects from the Apostles. They were all Jews, and were still attached in feeling to some of the forms of Judaism.

While earnestly engaged in preaching that Jesus was the Messiah, and that salvation was possible only through his cross, they had not yet gone so far as to insist that the Gospel was to displace the entire system of the Old Covenant. (Paul had not yet appeared, with his radical departures from the ancient forms.) But Stephen was a foreign-born Jew who had been liberalized in the philosophic atmosphere of Greece, and he was therefore prepared to grasp and wield the entirety of the "truth in Jesus." Therefore he did not shrink from declaring the "whole counsel of God." In the synagogues and wherever the native or foreign Jews were gathered, he stood forth and announced that the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles must be broken down, the reign of the Mosaic code was over, and Priest and Temple and Ritual were no longer necessary but must soon disappear.

This was new and startling doctrine to the Hebrews. Even the apostles had not ventured on such innovations. The people resented it fiercely. It was hard enough to accept the offense of the cross, and believe that their long-expected Messiah had come in the person of a Nazarene who had been crucified. But if also they must renounce all the glories of their traditional faith, and see Mount Zion dismantled of its honors, the sacrifice appeared to be intolerable. So they protested, and argued, and plead with the bold preacher and his destructive radicalism, but in

vain. "They were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."

Naturally their next step was toward violence. Just as the enemies of Jesus had resorted to the arm of the law for the means of suppressing him and his doctrine, so did the opponents of Stephen. He was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin, where false witnesses were provided, who testified that they had heard him say that "this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us." And so it came to pass that exactly where the Head of the church had stood not long before, in the midst of the same circle of enemies and arraigned before the same tribunal, charged also with the same kind of offenses, this Deacon of the church now stood, to plead his master's cause and meet his master's fate.

The scene is one of intense dramatic interest and is described with graphic power. Alone he stands, the brave protestant, with not a friend at his side. All around him are the dark faces and burning eyes of ecclesiastics who well remember that night assembly so recently held, when the Man of Nazareth stood before them and defied their authority. They had supposed that the crucifixion would put an end to the profane profession of the Galilean; and now the same accursed cause is before them once more in the person of this defiant Grecian. Well, they will make short work of his case anyway: and their fell resolve glares on him from every eye.

But he—lo, an apparition! As the council gaze on him so cruelly, he seems to change before them. In face and figure he grows bright with unearthly glory; "all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face

as it had been the face of an angel." It was a Transfiguration like that of his Lord upon the mount. And what wonder when we know that he was "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost!" Why should not the inner divinity shine forth through the physical tabernacle and render it celestial? Then followed the speech in his own defense which it was the legal right of every prisoner to make. As recorded in the seventh chapter, it is the longest and most elaborate oration in the Bible. It consists of a review of Hebrew history in the light of the Messianic idea, finding a basis therein for the charge that the Jews had always been slow to believe and ready to obstruct the gifts of God. Their entire history abounded in antecedents for the hardness of heart which was now opposing the Gospel, and they were worthy of their blind and besotted ancestry. The terrible arraignment gathers force until it bursts in the tremendous climax—"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcized in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye."

The effect of such a charge can be imagined. Priests and Elders, Pharisees and Scribes, turn into wild beasts and gnash on him with their teeth. But he heeds them not. He is past all fear and trouble now. Being full of the Holy Ghost, he looks up steadfastly into heaven, and sees the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. This he declares, with his angelic face radiant and his voice loud with triumph. That is enough to seal his fate. The infuriate council breaks into a mob that, without waiting for a formal sentence, hurls itself on the prisoner and rushes away with him to the place of execution. There with desperate haste and fury, they cast him down and stone him to death—he kneeling meekly to receive his

fate, and repeating the prayer of the cross, "Lord lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this he fell asleep."

This pathetic tragedy ranks next to that of the Cross of Calvary. In the whole Bible there is no other scene which so closely resembles the supreme agony of the Redeemer. And is it not remarkable that Stephen is the only officer of the apostolic church, the details of whose death are related in the Book of Acts? Not one of the Apostles is thus honored. Every one of the original twelve died a martyr's death, but we are indebted to profane history for a knowledge of the facts. The first of the deacons is the only one who shares with the Savior the honor of having his death described, and his last words recorded, on the page of Holy Scripture.

Perhaps one reason for this preeminence may be found in the fact that the martyrdom of Stephen was the means or occasion of adding to the infant church its most important ally. It is recorded that one of the official witnesses of his execution was "a young man whose name was Saul." And although it is not so stated in the sacred history, tradition has ever since held, what it is reasonable to believe, that it was the spectacle of that Christ-like death which began the process of Saul's conviction and conversion. "If Stephen had not died, the church had not had Paul." Surely then there was a divine utility in that tragic scene—an unspeakable gain for the future in that sad loss to the early church.

1. The great lesson of Stephen's life lies in the words which are its epitaph—"a man filled with the Holy Ghost." This shows us wherein lay the original endowment and triumphant impulse of the church of Christ. For observe,

this great gift was not confined to the apostles. Promised at first to them by their Lord before his ascension, and bestowed on them as a glorious "pleroma" at Pentecost, it was at once imparted by them to others—"they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Of this general and popular inspiration, Stephen was perhaps the most distinguished example. But the fact that he was outside the official circle of the apostles, and yet was a sharer in their special gifts, showed that the Holy Spirit was indeed "poured out on all flesh." The Epistles carry out this fact into doctrine—teaching that all believers are to walk in the spirit, quench not the spirit, grieve not the spirit, be filled with the spirit. These words are as binding on us today as on those of the first century. The divine inspiration is not confined to the pulpit or the regular ministry of the Word. Deacons are to receive it—the entire membership is to partake of it.

2. It must be noted also that *this "pleroma" is something different from regeneration.* Every soul who turns to Christ is born again of the Holy Spirit. All the graces of the new life are fruits of the Spirit. But as the disciples received a new and more glorious affusion of grace when they were baptized in the Holy Ghost and in fire, so are converted souls to look for something more than regeneration. They are to be "filled unto all the fulness of God," to "be filled with all joy and peace in believing, that they may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." That this special grace was not always connected with the power of miracles in the early church, is evident from the fact that all believers then enjoyed it; and if so then, why not now? The truth is that Stephen's face shining with transfiguration-light has been seen all

along the line of christian history. It was said of Thomas Welch, a godly minister of the Gospel in Ireland, that people often noticed a "serenity and something resembling splendor, which appeared on his countenance and in all his gestures." Of Fletcher of Maudly, "the radiance of heaven seemed to circle and glow about him wherever he went." Of John Howard, that his whole conversation exhibited a tissue of exalted piety, meek simplicity and glowing charity. And those who knew Dr. Gordon of Boston need not be told that he often preached like an angel of light, so marked and effulgent was the power of his spirituality.

But we should not confine ourselves to the mention of such names as Flavel, Edwards, Brainerd Taylor, Edward Payson and Charles Finney, for instances of this supernatural grace investing human life. For on how many of the private characters of the church has it been known to rest—the aureole of saintship! We have seen it shining round the brows of humble toilers—of patient sufferers—of tender children and aged pilgrims, who have displayed the Beauty of Holiness in their lives, being filled with the Spirit of light. The glorious truth is, that not one believer need feel himself excluded from this wonderful and blessed experience. Why should not each Lord's Day repeat the primitive scene—"the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word."

3. *The Pleroma was not confined to special times of exaltation or moments of miraculous ecstasy.* Stephen was filled with the Holy Ghost not only before the Council and in the article of death, but during his entire laborious life previously. His was a spirituality which was active, practical, useful. It made him a faithful deacon, an effective

lay-preacher, an earnest servant and redoubtable soldier of the cross. So it always has been and still is. To be filled with the Spirit means something more than a heavenly-mindedness that dwells near to God, and shines with angel-face on the world. It means the ready hand and fleet foot, the warm heart and strong mind of christian industry. This was its first manifestation, when "God annointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed with the devil."

Yes, that is it. We may well question the genuineness of a spiritual life that makes men hermits or self-involved visionaries of any kind. Not by abstractions of mood or aloofness from the world, does the Holy One signify his presence. Rather is he always the inspiration of practical righteousness, active charity, positive goodness. What the world needs today is the divine life that shows itself in missionaries like Paul, martyrs like Stephen, women such as Phoebe and Dorcas. There is no reason why such should not be. This is the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit. He has been poured out on all flesh, and the latter days have come, the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. There is no need to pray for the descent of the Spirit. As well ask that the sun should shine upon the earth. On every side we see evidence that the Spirit of God is brooding the abyss, as of old, to turn chaos into cosmos. Individual conversions and general harvests—revivals at home and missionary progress abroad—great reforms and reconstructions of society—a quickening of the churches and a moving of the world, all these are signs that God's spirit does still strive with men.

But are we prepared for His indwelling? Are our

hearts purged of the old leaven to become a habitation of God through the Spirit? Are we ready in the day of His power? These are the questions to be asked by us now. For it is as certain that every soul that is open and ready and anxious for the blessing will be filled with the Spirit, as that the human body will be quickened from the aerial element, when the lungs open themselves to the air that surrounds the globe.

Then will be fulfilled the glorious promise, that ye may be "strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man: that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God."

May such things be!

V.

THE PILOT CHART.

"Show me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths."—Ps. 25:4.

THE United States Government publishes every month what is called a "pilot chart," for the instruction of navigators on the Atlantic coast. It is printed in three colors, each of which conveys a particular kind of information. First, in black ink, are given the permanent features of the sea and shore, showing what remains the same at all times of the year. Second, printed in blue, are indicated the regular changes of current and wind which may be looked for at particular seasons. Third, in red, are shown the latest incidents—such as wrecks, or the results of storms, which may have a bearing on the immediate present. By consulting these maps each month, the mariner receives invaluable instruction as to his dangers and duties at any given time, as well as general knowledge useful at all times.

We may trace a parallel between these provisions for the sailor's help, and the methods by which God conveys his will to men for the moral guidance of life. First, there is the Bible, with its great outlines of truth and law, showing the eternal nature of duty, in those relations between heaven and earth which are always the same. Next, there are those expositions of the Divine Word which are furnished by human history and thought, showing how the

truth has borne upon life, and what its human aspects are. Lastly, there is personal experience, the witness of the Holy Spirit to each soul, translating general principles into the vernacular of individuality, and giving us day by day our daily bread.

All of these methods of publishing the will of God are timely and useful. We can safely dispense with none of them. They are the means by which eternal wisdom responds to the prayer, "Show me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths." And experience continually affirms that we cannot be too well equipped with guidance for the voyage of life. The Atlantic coast with its treacherous bars, its shifting currents and uncertain weather, is but a picture of the perils to which the soul is exposed. We are sailing over a more deceitful sea. We are exposed to worse contingencies. The polar star of truth is often obscured in our sky. Even the needle wavers in our conscience. The shores of time are strewn with wrecks that warn us of the possibilities of disaster. Woe to those who disregard these warnings and venture forth, to steer their course alone!

Behold the "pilot chart" which divine mercy and wisdom have provided—in its general and specific admonitions, its universal and local directions—suitable to all and applicable to each, God's three-fold answer to the cry, "show me thy ways, teach me thy paths."

1. *The Bible* is the principal means of spiritual instruction furnished us by God. Here we find clearly delineated the outlines of moral law respecting truth and duty. Here the grand realities of Time and Eternity are plainly made known. The unchanging verities of the divine being, nature and government; the origin,

constitution and destiny of mankind ; the whence and whither of human life ; the history of our race in its religious aspects ; the nature of sin and its treatment by God ; the possibility and means of salvation ; the proper conduct of life, the rule of duty, the method of moral culture, all needful knowledge of the future, the mystery of death and the contents of eternity—these elements and outlines of truth are provided in the Bible. Thus our pilot chart portrays the geography of the moral sphere. It shows the coast lines and currents, islands and continents, seas and shores of the world of life. No one who properly consults it need be in ignorance of the way from earth to heaven, or from darkness to light, at any particular point.

The Bible has its limitations. It was never intended to take the place of human investigation or to tell us what we may find for ourselves. It was not written to serve as a scientific text book, or historical manual, or cyclopedia of political, artistic, commercial knowledge. The design of Inspiration is to guide men toward spiritual truth which transcends their own efforts to attain ; and in the domain of divine wisdom it is infallible and supreme. Whatever we need to know in order to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, that the Scriptures will teach as nothing else can teach. Whatever is necessary to enable us to steer clear of moral error, and shape our course safely from earth to heaven, that will be found on our Pilot Chart as nowhere else. Much embarrassment would have been avoided, and many theological defeats prevented, if the students of the Word had always remembered its true function, and confined themselves to applying that service of truth to the world. “ Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way ? by taking heed thereto according to thy

Word." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." "The entrance of thy words giveth understanding to the simple."

Experience has verified these assertions. What book does the parent place in the hands of the child, or the aged recommend to the young? Bacon's Essays, Plato's Dialogues, Marcus Aurelius' Philosophy, Franklin's Maxims, Spencer's Ethics abound in good, true and useful teachings. But not one of them is, as a manual of moral duty, a guide from time to eternity, a supreme, infallible criterion, to be compared with the Law and Gospel of God. We find no problem of life on which the Bible does not throw light, no case of conscience which it cannot decide. All of the immemorial questions of the soul respecting duty and destiny are answered here. This book has been subjected to every test which friendly use and hostile criticism could apply. It has been searched by friends, and sifted by foes, as no other book was ever tried. It has been exalted to heaven and cast down to hades by the varying fortunes of religious prosperity and adversity ; but it has survived all of these vicissitudes, to hold in the world today a peerless place as the one sufficient guide and guardian of the human soul.

Such is the chart given us for the voyage of life. But of what use to the navigator the most perfect directory, unless he consults and follows it day by day? So with the Bible. Its serviceableness to us depends on our treatment of it. There are different ways of using the Scriptures. There is the mechanical routine of daily reading, so much at a time right through the year. (By reading three chapters each week-day, and five each Sunday, you may peruse the entire Bible in a year.) There is also

the plan of studious but occasional reference, using the Bible as a lawyer or physician consults his authorities for special guidance. Again, there is the method of systematic study according to a pre-arranged order, such as is now pursued by the societies for Bible reading which have been organized in different parts of the country. Each of these modes has been found useful; but of all it must be said that the only complete treatment of the Bible is that which involves the *spiritual* element. The Holy Spirit is the author and supervisor of the Scriptures, and He alone can fully interpret and apply them.

The very first condition of true Bible study is the prayer, "show me Thy ways, O, Lord, teach me Thy paths: lead me in Thy truth and teach me: for with Thee is the fountain of life, in Thy light shall we see light." The Bible has been microscopically studied for controversial purposes, it has been cruelly scrutinized by hostile criticism, it has been probed and tested by scientific inquiry, it has been tramped through by processions of routine readers who have made of every page a foot-worn avenue of religious formality; but it remains an unknown book except to those who come to it with the teachable heart of spiritual believers. Then the Word of the Lord becomes a Pillar of Fire in the wilderness, an Oracle vocal in the shrine, a Counselor, Companion, Defender and Lord.

" Lamp of our feet, whereby we trace
Our paths when wont to stray,
Stream from the fount of heavenly grace,
Brook by the traveler's way:

" Word of the everlasting God,
Will of His glorious Son,
Without Thee how could earth be trod,
Or heaven itself be won?"

2. The Bible does not stand alone as a revelation of the Divine Will to men. It has been reissued, as it were, in the form of *Christian literature*, which gives to its truth a local or personal application—corresponding to the modifications of the pilot chart according to the season of the year. The Bible needs this kind of translation into the language of human use, for it abounds in antique expressions, national traits and obscure references, which are not applicable to the present time without explanation. It also contains mysteries of truth, symbolisms, and abstruse argumentation, which cannot be grasped readily by the common reader. Wherefore the Holy Spirit has in all ages moved certain minds to become *expositors* and teachers of the Word. Thence came to us our *commentaries*, works of examination and explanation, which cannot be dispensed with by those who would know what is the fullness of the truth. The popular objection to such works as being merely professional, betrays ignorance of the real character of the sacred writings. For while it is true that the way of life, as made known in the Bible, is so plain that a wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein, it is also true that the uninstructed reader is liable to miss many of the details of the truth. How will he distinguish, *e. g.*, without a guide, between the four methods of statement used in the Scripture—plain narrative, logical argument, figurative language, and spiritual sense? The widely differing meanings of such words as hell, world, and heart, in different places, would not reveal themselves to the ordinary reader. So common a term as “name” is applied in eleven distinct senses to God, in four separate meanings to Christ, and in eight to man. And sometimes a great doctrinal signifi-

cance may depend on some one of these verbal distinctions. Here then appears the place for *scholarship*, linguistic, archaeological and historic, as a guide to an acute perception of the forms of truth. And much more is this the case with respect to the great volumes of meaning stored in the prophecies, symbolisms, theological discussions of the Bible. They all need, and have received, the investigation of reverent minds, who have reduced them to the terms of ordinary comprehension. What new editions of the Bible are being published now—all pictorial and attractive with the comments of theology, the illustrations of life, and the confirmation of science !

But this is not all. Bible truth has been translated into Christian literature, whose reflex influence has brightened all the sacred pages. How much does the world owe in this sense to the religious poetry of Milton and Watts, Cowper, Wesley, Keble and others ! How much to such scriptural effusions as Pilgrim's Progress and Hannah More's tracts ! There are also devotional works—those of Baxter, Doddridge, Phillips, and Haver-gal, which go hand in hand with Bible study. No Christian can afford to neglect this ever growing brood of the offspring of the Bible. They are its republications in the form of historic and social evolution. They at once attest and illustrate its divinity. The libraries of exegetical, theological, sermonic and biographical literature, which are growing so rapidly, are the means by which divine truth is keeping pace with the advance of knowledge and the progress of society. Our Sunday School literature—how vast and valuable it is growing to be ! Nor should we omit to mention in this connection, the supreme importance of the *Christian newspaper* as a factor in the de-

velopment of God's kingdom in the world. A properly conducted religious journal is invaluable as a record of the progress of the truth, and a witness to the operations of the Holy Spirit. It shows us what new forms the Bible is taking in the expressions of Christian life, and what new work it is doing day by day for Christ.

3. There remains the most important channel of religious instruction, in what we call *personal experience*. This is that work of grace, wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, which makes of every believer an original explorer and discoverer of divine truth. It is the *red marked* outlines of the Pilot chart, which give to the mariner the latest and most important instructions about the sea and shore.

The greatest wonder of the Bible is that it is capable of being translated into the language of every distinct individuality in the world. It is applicable to every phase of personal piety and to every condition of human need. Its truth keeps pace with all the developments of life—growing with our growth, rising and falling with our moods. It was the guide book of the ancient Hebrew, and it is equally serviceable to the modern American. It exactly met the wants of Augustine the theologian, and of Bunyan the dreamer; and there is not a man in his store or a woman in her home today, who may not find in the scriptures something perfectly adapted to their personal situation.

Now that is what each soul should seek. It is not the Bible as any one else reads it, but the Bible as seen through the lens of your own nature, that will help you. Whoever tries to guide his life entirely by what he hears from the pulpit or reads in the books, will be in danger of

going astray. Yet how much of this indirect dependence on Gospel truth there is! Many people know the Bible only through other peoples' knowledge of it. The difference between direct and indirect knowledge is like that between sunshine and moonlight. Most of the virtue of the sunbeam is lost by the time it reaches us via the moon. So it is with all secondary acquaintance with the Bible—it enjoys but a reflected and weakened glory. The prayer for each one to offer is "Show *me* thy ways O Lord, teach *me* thy paths." Let everyone offer his individuality to the Spirit, to be filled with truth and used by grace according to its peculiar capacity. And doubt not the divine response. It will come speedily in such a specific adaptation of the word to the soul, as will make of each life a new voice of God to the world—something fresh and wonderful. That is the secret of every Apostle who comes forth and shakes the earth with his message. Luther and Calvin, Wesley and Whitefield, Judson, Spurgeon, Moody are specimens of what the Bible can do, when incarnated in a perfectly consecrated human being. It becomes a new book—a new force of wisdom and righteousness.

We plead therefore for more originality in the church. Not that novelty or eccentricity are to be cultivated, but that every soul should aim at its own self-culture and self-assertion. There are plenty of people in the world, but not enough persons. Multitudes of men and women abound, but they are not individualized. It is a common fault with the pulpit that it is imitative or reproductive. Our preaching lacks the savor of that olden witness whose

"Every word that he spoke had been fireily furnaced,
In the blast of a life that had striven in earnest."

The religion of the day is too often a matter of echo

and reflection. People believe what is told them. They wear conventionalized garb and all look alike. What is needed by the church is the Gospel so wrought into human character and developed by human life, that every believer shall be a "living epistle known and read of all men."

The United States Government does not make and issue a special chart for every mariner who applies. One map published each month will serve for all—the same plate will send forth any number of impressions, and they all tell the same story. Our Bible societies are pursuing a similar plan. They are printing the scriptures at the rate of ten copies a minute for every working day in the year; and their illustrative literature is even more copiously furnished. But all souls cannot steer the same course over the sea of life. Each of us needs a Bible of his own, with its revelation of the divine will adjusted to his personal state. And that is the blessed work of the Spirit of Truth. There are as many Bibles as varieties of christian consciousness. You have yours, I have mine. Neither of us can find the other's, or read it if found. Prize your Bible as you would a letter written from a personal friend. Read, study, ponder those sacred illuminations which vital experience conveys. They are the word of the Lord for your ear alone.

And if you have no such Bible, if you know of no other copy of the scriptures than that which you may buy at the store, take it as evidence that you are alone in the world. God has not spoken to you. In general terms he has addressed you as one of the multitude of the lost whom he would save. But no particular message has reached you from him. You are not among his children,

or the friends of his love. What then will you do when the winds and waters rise against your struggling bark, and all things conspire to defeat your voyage? How can you shape your course when the lights of heaven are obscured, and this world shows only a storm-swept coast? Be wise in time, and by vital consecration secure for yourself the divine guidance which the Bible never withholds from those who truly seek it.

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory."

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

VI. WATERLOO.

“Curse ye, Meros! said the Angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof! because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”—JUDGES, 5:23.

THE battle of Waterloo ranks among the decisive battles of the world. It was peculiar in this: each of the contestants, Napoleon and Wellington, depended for help on a subordinate who was absent from the field. The French general had detached a large force under Grouchy to pursue the Prussians and prevent them from joining Wellington. The English commander was depending on Blucher to bring his army to assist him against the French. Napoleon was disappointed by his lieutenant; Wellington was not disappointed by his ally. The contrast between Grouchy and Blucher at Waterloo is very impressive, and for religious purposes, instructive. Consider those two officers, each in command of a large force which was greatly needed by the main body to which it was related.

Grouchy hears the thunder of the battle on the horizon, and knows that his master is engaged in a death struggle with his enemies; but, blindly bent on a mistaken sense of duty, he will not hasten to his aid. Some of his subordinates, experienced soldiers, urge him to sacrifice everything for the main issue, and rejoin his chief; but no; Grouchy believes he is doing his duty by following the rear guard of the Prussians (who had been left in his front only

to deceive him) and so goes on, indifferent to the tragedy which he might have averted.

Blucher acts very differently. Well aware that the real crisis is not with the French who are following him, but with the army from which they have been detached, he needs no one to advise him what to do. Leaving a small force to engage Grouchy's attention, as soon as he hears the cannonade in the west, he leads his men in that direction. They do not want to go. Worn and weary with previous exertions, they find the march too difficult. But old Marshal Vorwarts urges them on—"I have given my word to Wellington and I will join him." Wounded and sore himself, hardly able to keep the saddle, he forces everything on to the appointed union. And so it came to pass that when the French emperor in his hour of extremity, looked anxiously for help, it did not come. One third of his army was absent just when he needed it most, because of the failure of the help on which he relied; while Wellington, hard pressed and barely able to hold his ground, heard at the crisis the welcome sound of his allies coming to his aid. He conquered because he was not disappointed by those in whom he trusted.

Grouchy and Blucher at Waterloo were typical characters. They were representatives of attitudes and actions of life, which are continually apparent in the moral world. The contrast between readiness to help and unreadiness, between faithfulness to a trust and unfaithfulness, is always before our eyes. Waterloo was not the only battle lost by the failure of expected help to arrive. The defeat of Bull Run in our own civil war is a parallel instance; and far back in Hebrew history we find a corresponding case. A certain portion of Israel proved untrue to the Lord's cause

in the hour of trial. Wherefore a bitter curse was invoked upon Meroz because they "came not to the help of the Lord—to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

To withhold that which is expected and due is an offense, of various aspects and degrees of blameworthiness.

1. There is *a conscientious withholding* of what is due. In some cases Meroz does not come up to the help of the Lord, because of a mistaken but sincere idea of duty. This was the excuse of Grouchy for not coming to the help of Napoleon at Waterloo. He thought that he was best serving his master by pursuing the Prussians; and a narrow construction of his orders favored that idea. His error lay in not perceiving, what some of his officers saw, that the enemy was deceiving him and holding him to a minor issue while the great problem was being solved elsewhere.

This is an illustration of the manner in which the servants of God are sometimes misled by the adversary. He diverts their attention from the real necessities of the kingdom of Heaven, by presenting side issues of inferior importance. Thus they become absorbed in what they regard as matters of vital religious interest, to the neglect of the work which the Lord has given them to do. What is the true, the paramount mission of Christianity in this world? Surely it is to execute the great commission—"make disciples of all nations." The salvation of souls by the cross of Christ is the real business of the church, as it was that of the Head of the church. "The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost;" "as the Father sent me into the world, so send I you." Here then is the Waterloo—the battlefield where the armies of heaven and hell confront each other, to decide

the question “shall man be lost or saved forever?” It is to this great issue that the love of God, the grace of Christ and the operations of the Holy Spirit, are being continually applied; while all the resources of the powers of darkness are being directed to the same critical point—“is eternal life or everlasting death to be the portion of the human soul?” No wonder that the Head of the church appeals to his people for their services—commands and expects their assistance—“ye are my witnesses;” “go preach;” “he that winneth souls is wise.”

But alas for the response! How often does the Lord look in vain for Meroz to come up to his help against the mighty! Engaged in a desperate struggle with the world, the flesh and the devil, the Gospel is not seldom deprived of the reinforcements which it has the right to expect. The church is not living up to its mission. And why? it is the story of Grouchy at Waterloo. Christians are busy with other and subordinate matters. They are concerned with the enemy in his minor developments, and deem it the whole of their duty to rectify human error, reform worldly abuses, purify local distempers. All of which is well; but it is by no means the central and most important work of the church. The strength of sin, its vital hold on this world, lies in the depravity of the human heart—not in the issues thereof in human words and works. What man needs is not reformation but regeneration. It is not by external correction of life, but by internal purification of soul, that humanity is to be saved. To disregard this radical necessity and to enter on a course of moral instruction and humanitarian reform, is for the church, the sin of withholding from the Lord the help which he expects from it. It may be the result of a mis-

take with regard to duty. Christian preachers sometimes think that by confining themselves to ethical instruction, or to the apologetics of the faith, or to the religious entertainment of the masses, they are fulfilling their calling. These things are indeed part of their calling; but to go no further and to do nothing more, is to come short of the ideal of Christ—which is the salvation of the lost.

Satan knows this well. It is part of the strategy of evil to divert the forces of truth from the main issue. As Blucher kept Grouchy away from his master's side at Waterloo, by engaging his attention with a false front, so does the enemy of souls often prevent christians from going to the help of the Lord. He keeps them busy with the secondary affairs of human ignorance, and curiosity, and temporal needs. He induces them to spend their strength on moralistic teaching, reformatory measures, benevolent operations. All of which kind of work is good and useful in its place. But Christ would be doing something more than that in this world. The Holy Spirit has a higher mission here than merely to relieve the temporal wants of our nature. What God intends for men is their present and eternal salvation from the power of sin. Nothing less than this will satisfy our true needs and His infinite love.

Here then is the Waterloo of spiritual duty. This alternative of life or death for the human soul, is where Christ and his angels take their stand. And here is where his people should be. The Cross of Calvary—symbol of redemption by the blood of the Lamb, is the standard of the church—its rallying point and warcry. Let nothing obscure this to our eyes. It is the settled policy of the Evil One to divert Christians from the Cross. He will do

anything in order to weaken their hold on this one means of salvation. Satan has no objection to our preaching morality if we make that supreme; nor will he object to our insisting on the Bible if it is made the beginning and end of faith; nor will he oppose the church, if membership in it becomes the whole of religion. He may even assist us in these directions. But the one thing which he will resist unsparingly, is the preaching of the Cross of Christ as the only means of salvation; for the experience of eighteen centuries has taught him that there is the power of God and the wisdom of God, as nowhere else. Too often he succeeds in his infernal strategy, and many sincere believers in Christ are spending their lives in the cultivation of virtue and the reprobation of error as the chief means of converting the world, not knowing that they are deceived themselves and deceivers of others. It is the fatal mistake of Grouchy at Waterloo. For experience affirms that no amount of mental enlightenment or moralistic reform can take the place of spiritual salvation.

Let then the curse of Meroz for not coming to the help of the Lord against the mighty warn all preachers and teachers and authors to be true to the original commission and paramount duty of the church. It is on the battle-ground of Calvary—there and there alone, that the destinies of human souls are to be decided.

Of course the church is the agent of divine grace for all kinds of moral, intellectual, and material benefit to the world. The preaching of the Word involves instruction in practical righteousness; it is part of our business to foster the cultivation of virtue, and secure the general improvement of society. We only contend that the Lord's chief work and our first concern, is to make of the Cross

the starting point of all progress, and of the salvation of the soul the basis of all betterment. With regard to all other and secondary duties, Christian truth teaches, "These things ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone."

2. *There is a withholding because of indifference.* Meroz does not come to the help of the Lord for the reason that it has lost its interest in his service, or but faintly hears his voice, or having heard it is apathetic or unready to respond. This was not the error of Grouchy at Waterloo. He was busy enough, but at the wrong place and in the wrong way. Indifference, however, has always been common among the servants and soldiers of God. They have been kept away from his side at critical moments by luke-warmness of heart, or idleness of habit, or ignorance of their own ability. They may be so involved in the affairs of this world, as to have no time to spend on those of the kingdom of heaven. Yet they wish it well, and would resent being classed among the enemies of the Cross, or even among its timid defenders. Are they not in their places as members of the church, with all the outward marks of fidelity?

Yes; but are they with Christ when he sorrows unto death in the Garden? Are they at his feet with Mary rather than cumbered with serving like Martha? Do they stand beside their Master in the Judgment Hall and go with him to the Cross? No one could estimate the amount of money which might have gone into the Lord's treasury, but has been spent on personal gratification; or the thought and care and labor which might have served his cause powerfully, but have been diverted to other things.

Let us consider one of the most active causes of the

sin of Meroz. It is *self-ignorance*. Many Christians do not come to the help of the Lord because they do not know that they can help him. They feel so poor and weak in themselves, that it seems incredible that anyone else can be helped by them. They can barely hold their own against the powers of darkness ; it takes all their religion to simply exist as Christians. How then can they render any desirable service to the Almighty ? Can the absolute Holiness be helped by human infirmity, or the infinite Wealth stand in need of our poverty ? Such are the considerations which paralyze many true but feeble followers of Christ. And they seem to be founded in reason, do they not ? No: there is no real basis for such pleas, because they disregard the express assurance of inspiration—"God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the mighty—the foolish things, the wise—the base, the noble." They forget that Jesus called and commissioned the fishermen as his agents, and said even of little children, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." They contradict all of the precedents of Christian history, in which the Lord has so often with a worm threshed mountains and raised out of the dust his champions.

Furthermore, I submit that we are now living in a day when there is no longer any practical excuse for this kind of self-ignorance and depreciation. We know from actual experience that there is a place and need for everyone and everything of moral value, in the Lord's service. Older Christians well remember the time when no one thought of looking to the young people of the church, for any considerable contribution to its evangelical efficiency. When in my father's church in Troy, New York, the first Young Peoples' Covenant Band known in our denom-

ination was formed, many of the elders regarded it with some suspicion. A similar reception was given by conservative church members to the Y. M. C. A. movement, when it originated in England and afterward appeared in this country. It was held to be an unnecessary if not an impertinent intrusion on the regular methods of church work. But Christians have long outgrown these prejudices, and now the wonderful success of these new means and measures of religious activity, has shown to all the value of elements hitherto unused by Christianity. So the children add their mites to the Lord's treasury, youths and maidens help forward the cause of missions, and woman (once silent and powerless) is now a recognized force in nearly all of the great movements of the age. Thus is being fulfilled the prophecy, "I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." So, then, they are without excuse who come not to the help of the Lord against the mighty, because of their relative insignificance or inactivity.

Only a little money to give! but do you not know that with our present facilities for spreading the Gospel through the world, five cents can do more than fifty dollars could do in the last century? Only a child or a childish influence! but look at the Boys' Brigades, and the Girls' societies and the "Busy Bees" that have made themselves felt all over the land. Only a private person's sphere of obscure living! but it was a christian merchant who started Dwight Moody on his career of evangelism; it was a godly woman's word in season that gave to the Methodist church one of its ablest leaders; it was a plain

farmer's prayer that opened one of the most extensive revivals ever known in the East. So has it been shown again and again that there is nothing absolutely great or small in human instrumentality, but that everything has a relative importance determined by its moral usefulness. There is no such thing as total disability in the service of Christ. Not long ago I heard of a woman in this state who has been for years a bed-ridden invalid—hopeless of recovery. And yet in her sick-chamber she is the very heart of a little church, that depends on her counsel and prayers for the inspiration of wisdom and energy by which it lives. This is what Paul meant by glorying in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him; for when he was weak then was he strong.

What, then, shall be said of withholding from the Lord whatever we can contribute, because of its comparative smallness and weakness? But no one can tell what is important or unimportant, until it has been given to God to use. Suppose that Moses had refused to use that shepherd's rod, or Gideon the lamps and pitchers, or David the sling, because of the insignificance of such means! Or that the little maid had withheld her testimony to Naaman on account of her lowliness! They would have done just what you and I sometimes feel disposed to do, with the means at our command. But how much the world would have missed then!—just as it is the poorer now from the loss of what we might but do not perform.

O these little things! how often they are the pivots on which vast results turn! The presence or the absence of one person—his doing or not doing something at a crisis, has been the hinge on which the gates of destiny have swung one way or the other for the world. It was

the word in season of one man that turned Luther toward the Reformation ; it was the reading of a little tract that made Mr. Oncken the Baptist pioneer of Germany. So on the other hand the absence of one member from the American Congress of 1783, prevented Thomas Jefferson's measure for the exclusion of slavery from all of the colonies from being adopted—and so opened the way eventually to the great secession war. Thus a pebble in the streamlet scant has turned the course of many a river ; and when the question arises whether we should do something, however small, for God, let us remember this, lest the crime of Meroz be laid at our doors.

We live in an age and a land of tremendous possibilities. America is but another name for "opportunity." Here all of the old shackles of conservatism and prejudice are being cast off, and the prediction is being fulfilled that there is not male and female, old and young, rich and poor, high and low in the service of the Gospel, but all are one in Christ Jesus. They are on one level of privilege that they may be "workers together with God;" and he waits for them to come to his help against the mighty.

" We are living, we are dwelling
In a grand and awful time ;
In an age to ages telling
To be living is sublime.

" Will ye play then, will ye dally
With your music and your wine ?—
Up ! it is Jehovah's rally ;
God's own arm hath need of thine."

3. There *is the withholding of deliberate refusal.* Meroz will not come to the help of the Lord against the mighty, because it is not willing to help him; it refuses to bow to his authority, it resists his claims. Meroz is

sometimes the enemy of God. We have only to recall the rejection of Jesus by Jerusalem, to find an illustration of this which has been repeated endlessly. And in every instance, how surely does the curse fall on Meroz in return for its recusancy! Never yet did anyone refuse the divine appeal, without sooner or later suffering from the divine abandonment. When the Reformation came like the Angel of the Resurrection to buried Europe, the Gospel aroused every nation—Spain, France and Italy, as well as Germany and England. But they knew not the time of their visitation, and soon their house was left unto them desolate. Thomas Carlyle heard the word of the Lord in his early years, and was deeply stirred by the Spirit of Truth. If he had yielded to those appeals, he might have become the John Knox of the nineteenth century; but, as he describes in his Autobiography, he emerged from that experience with nothing but a religion of self-reliance in his heart; and the result was that he was left to become the champion of force, the harsh critic, and finally the gloomy pessimist. A similar fate befell Aaron Burr, after he had withstood the religious advantages and special appeals of his early years.

It is a terrible thing to say “no” to God. In refusing Him we turn our backs upon our own highest possibilities—we choose death instead of life. O, if the lost in the world of woe could return to this earth and once more enjoy the opportunities of grace, think you that one of them would resist the Gospel again? Now they know what it means to do despite to the Spirit of grace; and they would not repeat that error, we may be sure! But the scriptures speak no word of hope for those who have enjoyed and have misused the occasion of salvation; rather the reverse.

“ Because I called and ye refused, I stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at naught all my counsel and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh ; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early but they shall not find me, for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.”

This is just. Why should anyone ask for another chance after abusing his first opportunity?—will a second springtime be given or another childhood, to those who have neglected the early advantages of nature and life?

Dear friends! hear the word of the Lord, and withhold not your help when he calls for it. Let the sinner heed his voice. It is a call to you even in your sins. The Lord has a place for you in his service and at his side. It is not only your personal salvation that is at stake, but your possible usefulness that he has in mind. He calls you from sin to salvation, and that is much. But he would honor you with divine employment, and that is more. Think of what he did with Peter the profane fisherman, and with Saul of Tarsus the Pharisee. It is Destiny that summons you when Jesus calls. For your own sake, for the sake of others whom you might save, for the sake of the world that needs you, and of God who waits to employ you, withhold not your heart and your hand from the help of the Lord against the mighty.

VII.

THE PRIESTLY BELLS

OR

THE TWO VOICES OF RELIGION.

"And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: 34. A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. 35. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not."—Ex.28:33.

THE High Priest of the Hebrews, when in full regalia, must have presented a splendid spectacle. He was the culminating point of that religion of forms, which was divinely appointed to serve as the historic prelude of the religion of spirit. Of this complex and ornate establishment the High Priest was the human apex. In his office the symbolism of the Mosaic code reached its culmination, for he was the representative of men to God and of God to men. He stood between heaven and earth, to propitiate the former and to sanctify the latter. This was duly signified by his official attire. When fully arrayed in his canonicals, the High Priest was a most imposing figure. On his head a lofty mitre or turban of white bore a frontlet of gold inscribed "Holiness to the Lord." Around him was the red tunic of the Ephod, bearing on its breast the jeweled square from which flashed the names of the twelve tribes, each graven on a gem. Beneath this garment a

longer robe of blue extended to the knees, and beneath it another of white, reaching to the feet. No wonder that when this many colored form stood before the people, shining and splendid with chromatic display, every Hebrew who gazed upon it was impressed as by something unearthly and celestial.

But there was one item of the sacred attire which was most peculiar. Round the border of the blue robe was a fringe of alternate balls and bells, which encircled the High Priest with a zone of melody whenever he moved. And there was a religious reason for this. It was his duty on the great Day of Atonement, to take the blood of the sin offering and carry it into the most Holy place of the Tabernacle. There he offered it as a sacrifice before the Mercy Seat, and then he returned to the waiting worshippers without, with the assurance that Jehovah had accepted their offering. Now as he went on this solemn errand of propitiation, the bells on his robe rang out their music, sending it in advance, as though to announce his approach to the shrine of the Most High ;—this “that he die not:” for such reverence was exacted of all drawing near to the awful Majesty. So also when he turned to go back to the people, the bells sounded forth again, to notify the listening multitude that their representative was returning in safety. Such was the office of the priestly bells—it was much more than ornamental. It had a religious utility.

And more :—all these things were emblems of spiritual realities. The High Priest, with his mitre of consecration and his breastplate of intercession, was a prefigurament of the Mediator between God and man, who has made of himself a sacrifice for our sins, and is now ever living as our Intercessor before the Mercy Seat. As such every de-

tail of his attire had a symbolical significance. The music of the bells going before Aaron when he went into the Holy Place, to announce his coming from man to God, and again sending their melody in advance when he came back from God to men—of what was that the emblem but of this —*the two voices of religion?* one sounding from earth to heaven, and the other pealing from heaven to earth!

The Apostle and High Priest of our profession has given to Christianity this two-fold office :—it is on the one hand a human exercise of faith and hope, and on the other a divine bestowal of pardon and peace. It is man's offering of worship ; it is God's assurance of acceptance. It is our prayer and praise ; it is heaven's answer of grace. And so the bells are ever ringing on the robe of our Mediator, as he goes unto the heavenly shrine to bear our words and works before the Lord : and blessed truth ! they are sounding still as he comes back with benediction in his hands, to assure us of an opened heaven and a reconciled God.

1. *The voice of Religion which sounds from earth to heaven.*

Religion should have a voice : it must be, and always is when true, an audible vocal thing. A silent, signless religion would be unworthy of itself. It would be as thought without speech, resolution without action—a mere beginning that had no ending. But whenever men really believe in something higher and better than themselves, they are sure to express that belief in outward forms of some kind. Jesus commanded his disciples to confess him before men, to let their light shine. Experience affirms that a public profession of the faith and an assumption of

the duties of church membership, are as a rule necessary to a healthy progressive religious life.

But there are different kinds of expression—full or faint, pleasing and powerful or disagreeable and ineffective. Let us then remember the bells upon the High Priest's robe, and see in them an illustration of what the manifestations of religion should be—not only audible and vocal, but melodious and pleasure-giving. This is the meaning of the bell. It is more than noise—it is tone. Noise is to tone what nature often is to art—the raw material as compared with the finished product. Noise may be rude, rough, impressive but disagreeable. Tone is the result of a scientific adjustment of this crude element to the laws of hearing. When the vibrations of a substance stir the air into regular undulations, the effect on the auditory nerve is what we call tone; in combination it is harmony: in terms of thought it is music. Now of this artistic effect, the bell is one of the most familiar illustrations. Any piece of metal when struck will emit a noise, perhaps a tone. But it is not until metal is shaped into a peculiar curved form, that it is capable of those swelling radiating waves of sound, which are so welcome to human ears.

Our text is the first historic record of the use of the bell—although something of the kind has been known in all ages of human use. The bell on the priestly robe was probably a small hollow globe of brass. In the form that is now familiar to us it has played a very prominent part in human history. Of all sizes and shapes—from the huge broken Bell of Moscow, nineteen feet in height, to the little signalizer of the street car—who could enumerate its uses? It has voiced great political agitations and religious movements, sounding the awful signal of the Sicilian

vespers and the massacre of St. Bartholemew ; or pealing forth the clarion of the Revolution on July 4th, 1776. Likewise it serves our common life in numerous ways as the church bell, the school bell, the factory bell, the dinner bell, the door bell. It warns the sailor of the shoals—it publishes the engine on the track—it tells the hour from the steeple—it arouses the city because of the conflagration. Ringing joyously for the wedding—pealing wildly for the alarm—tolling solemnly for the dead, the bells attend us from the cradle to the grave.

If now we would find in this versatile utility a figure of religious serviceableness, we may learn from it that the expressions of the religious life should be clear, melodious and always adapted to the end in view.

The *first* public quality of religion should be the resonant or tone-producing power. It is not every kind or shape of metal that will produce tone-vibrations. So it is not every species of religion that can send forth a proper voice to the world. A feeble faith, unintelligent and unauthorized, will never make itself heard by men, nor will a downcast desponding mood, nor an impure devitalized spirituality. They may testify for God, but it will be of no avail. Their sound is too faint to catch the ear of a world surrounded by the noises of sin. Let an inconsistent christian speak for Christ in a prayer meeting or on the street, and who will listen to him? The true witness, whose sound is gone out into all the earth, and who is heard and heeded by men, is always one whose life gives volume and force to his words. He is filled with the Spirit. He abides in Christ. And it is that spiritualized character which is the genuine bell-metal that rings true when

struck. Its clear vibrations pierce the ear and reach the heart.

O for the ringing of these bells on the air of earth ! Never do their sweet vibrations die away from human history. Still in our memory we hear even yet the voice of some far melody that sounds from distant childhood, soft and pure as the Angelus that calls to evening prayer from church towers on the horizon. It comes from a mother's influence, a father's example, a teacher's words.

“So in our ears till reason dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul.
That ever looked through human eyes.”

Again :—Religion should not only be audible but *pleasingly* so. Its expressions are to be both clear and convincing. There are tones which do not commend themselves to the human ear. Some bells are audible far and near, but no one enjoys hearing them. We hear them and receive their intelligence, which may be useful. Nevertheless we often wish they were not so sharp or so flat, so high or so low. It would be well if christians bore this in mind about their own profession. In the publication of the Gospel much, very much, depends on the way in which it is proclaimed. The truths of salvation can be uttered in a voice smooth or harsh, easy to hear or difficult. And therein often lies the secret of success or failure. Alas for the bells that have sounded from the church at times!—cracked bells, wrangling jangling bells, bells that fill the air with theological disputation or polemic discord, bells which all must hear, but hearing they are dinned and hurt thereby! Was any spiritual good ever accomplished by such means? It is true that

timely and wholesome truth is not always welcome ; even the voice of Jesus sounded sternly to some who heard it. But let us not aggravate the necessary difficulties of the truth. There is no need of giving even to a painful message a repellant tone. And the blessed Gospel is so full of melody which the sinful and sorrowing ought to hear, that it is only the voice of music which can do justice to it. Ring then the bells that are pitched to the proper key. Remember the starry song that made the heavens resound, and let the anthem of "Peace on Earth" go pealing through the ages, never to die away.

The climax of metallic music is found in the Chimes, those combinations of sound which, when properly attuned, give such heightened effect to the church bells. I have heard a consonance of forty, seventy, even ninety bells, ranging from the smallest to the largest, the shrillest to the deepest ; and the result was like a vast aerial choir, filling the firmament with symphony. This is an emblem of what christian harmony might accomplish, when all the many varieties of character and capacity are made to blend in chromatic grace. Then each least and largest life might find its place as in an orchestra, and contribute even by its eccentricities to the general effect. But as matters are, too often mere dissonance is the result of the diversities that obtain in the Christian world. The bells are all out of tune and their jarring discord offends all who hear them. When will the chimes begin to ring that will usher in the blessed day of Christian symphony ?

Once more : There should be a study of *Adaptation* in the expressions of religion. The first question to be asked by a bell-founder is, "what place is it to occupy ?"

On that question will depend its size, weight, quality. For of course no one would ask for an engine bell to attach to his front door, or for a telephone bell to hang in a church steeple. We study adaptation, putting the large and strong to the extensive use, and the delicate and small to the limited area.

This principle is even more important in religion, for the services of divine truth are more varied and complex than any other kind of truth is called on to render. The Gospel must reach all kinds of life and all degrees of moral quality. It must be proclaimed to the world at large and to every soul in particular. It encounters the deaf who cannot hear and the indifferent who will not hear. Correspondingly varied then should be the voices of religion. Why thunder in a child's ears the awful sound which only a hardened man needs to hear? why sing the gentle music of love on occasions of terror and alarm? Yet how much of this maladjustment there is! This explains many of our failures. The secret of success in religion, as in everything else, is adaptation. Study occasions; see your object clearly; then fit the truth as closely as possible to the particular time and place.

It is wonderful how great is the scale of abilities at the command of the church. But they all correspond to the endless varieties of human need. Here is one preacher of the Gospel whose voice reaches every week vast congregations in this and other lands; there is a true apostle of Jesus who conveys the truth daily to a small circle of children. Yet there is need for both of them, and who shall say which is the more acceptable to the Master? His criterion is, Fidelity to his word! whatever the range of influence or the quality of power, spiritual success consists

in filling the sphere of duty. The great bell of Westminster, weighing fifteen tons, has a voice of solemn thunder that will startle London with its rolling roar. But is it any more useful to the world than the village bell that calls the hamlet to prayer?

Such are the Earth-voices of Religion. They are the forms of duty which the divine life assumes in its relations to the world. They are what Christ appointed, and what he listens to hear. A silent religion which has no word of truth for men, or of prayer and praise to God, is a disappointment and offense to the Most High. Not thus did the High Priest of our profession live his human life. His spirituality expressed itself in the vocal, audible, melodious, far-reaching and all-pervading power of a holy, useful life. And shall not his Church furnish him now with a robe of music-fringed fidelity, as he fulfills the office of Mediator between earth and heaven?

2. But it is time that we turn to the other aspects of Christianity—its *Heaven-Voice*. You remember that it was not only the duty of the High Priest to bear the offerings of the people to the Mercy Seat, as their representative to Jehovah; he must also return from the Most Holy Place, bringing the divine response as the representative of Jehovah to them. In token of which two-fold office, the bells on his robe announced his approach to the Sacred Shrine; and they also rang their music in advance of his return to the people.

Even so is it with his religion. Christianity is on one side a human exercise of prayer and praise to God, and of active service to the world in his name. But it is equally on the other side a divine bestowal of all kinds of heavenly grace upon men. How great the contrast between

these two voices—from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth! The earth voice is so often weak and unworthy—the bells on the High Priest's robe make such poor music as he goes from us to God, with our offerings of prayer and praise! Without his own intercession, our service would never find favor at the Mercy Seat. But the gifts of grace which return to us—who could find fault with them? How rich and full and free the blessings that Christ brings back from the Holy Place! The bells on the Priestly robe ring their sweetest music as the Mediator returns to the waiting people with Jehovah's benediction.

And so we say that Religion must have a divine as well as a human side. Something more than prayer and praise is needed in the sanctuary; there should be Revelation, inspiration from on high. Toward the world it is not enough that Christianity should present itself as practical righteousness in the lives of Christians: it should also mean visitations of Providence and Grace, supernatural outpourings of heavenly gifts. These are provided for in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, whose blessed office is to be the witness of God to men on earth, as the ascended Christ is the representative of men to God in glory. The Heaven-voices of religion are many and musical and mighty. No harsh tones ever sound from the bells on the robe of the returning High Priest. No tuneless note or jarring discord can be heard in the music that sings through the Bible. And in all the ministrations of the Holy Spirit where will the finest ear detect a fault in the sacred symphony?

It is an interesting fact that it was the Church which first elevated the bell, and gave to it the public religious office which it now fills. It is true, at least in European

history, that its function as a signalizer for religious services did not begin until the year 431, A. D., when Pauline of Nola adopted it for that use. It was then that the belfry appeared for the first time—an elevated station for the resounding signal. At first the bell tower was detached from the sacred edifice, as in the Campanile of Italy. When the Gothic, or pointed arch architecture appeared, the Spire was introduced: and thus at last the church steeple came to be, in after evolution, as the visible and audible monument of public worship so familiar and dear to us.

The elevation of the bell in its religious uses to a commanding eminence, is an emblem of the spiritual mission of Christianity. As the summons to the house of God comes to us from above the ordinary levels of life, filling the air as with a call from the skies, which is borne far and wide on the wings of the wind, so does the Gospel descend to men from a superior source. It is not of the earth earthly, but of heaven heavenly. It breathes a sound as from celestial spheres. It fills our low and heavy atmosphere with the inspiring melody of better worlds than this. At least it should do so.

Who would think of mounting a church bell on the level of the ground, and ringing it there? But why not? Evidently because it could not there have an unobstructed range for its radiating reach; it would lose its high vantage over the community. But I fear that there is sometimes a similar depression of the office of Christ's holy religion. Men bring it down to the level of material forms, and aesthetic associations, and intellectual methods. They give to it a human place and scope in the world, with their apologies and demonstrations. Such a religion never

sounds very far. The world at large does not hear it; or if they hear it, they miss the authority and force of the divine element. They do not hear the voice of God. When shall we learn that the spiritual is on a far higher plane of influence than the material? What sinful souls need is the demonstration of the Holy Spirit and his power. Never does the Gospel have free course to be glorified, until it comes to man as from the skies—with the etherial sweep and volume of a bell hung far above their heads.

Many a preacher and teacher fails of religious effect, because he has hung his bell too low. His words have not the power of the Spirit. It is but as man to men, and not as God to men. For there is something in the rich resonant tones of divine revelation, when uttered freely through the medium of human consecration, which no knowledge or wisdom of earth can equal.

The Roman Catholic church makes a great ado over the bells which it uses so often and vigorously in its service. Before any church spire can receive its metallic voice, the bell must be blessed or baptized as they call it. An elaborate ceremony is provided, in which the priest with incantation and anointing, consecrates it to its holy office, so that its sound shall have power to drive away evil spirits, and summon the angels, as well as call the faithful, to prayer. This superstitious practice is in harmony with the false ideas of the church and its sacramental virtues, which the Romanist cherishes.

We believe that the Gospel needs no embellishment at the hands of men. As well paint the lily or gild refined gold, as try to improve on the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus. No bell can emit a purer or louder volume

of sound because of ecclesiastical manipulations. What the Gospel asks of us, is to give it a proper eminence and range in the world, and let it utter its own voice as it will. When the church exalts its living Head in all its honor and devotion, and makes of his truth its one cause on earth; when the Holy Spirit finds in christian life a true shrine and oracle for his use, then will Christianity find its Earth-voice and its Heaven-voice indeed.

Sounding ever above the dust and din of time, its music calls men to the place of worship, warns them of danger, signalizes their duty, and notes for them the passage of time. Sweetly its carols chime for the wedding, solemnly they toll for the dead. Proudly they peal when the processions of power fill the streets, and tenderly they fill the air when Vesper breathes the sunset notes of prayer. So shall the whole world at last be filled with this music—even the bells on the horses will be inscribed “holiness to the Lord,” and every form of labor and of progress will be timed by its rhythm.

With this prospect let our religion fill the daily office of anticipation and announcement. The bells on the priestly robe of Christ should cease not day or night to

“Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold,
Ring out the thousand years of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.”

“Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand!
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.”

VIII. RULER OR RULED?

"All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."—I COR. 6:12.

TO RULE or to be ruled? this is one of the great questions of life. Shall man be servant or master? One of the two he must be. But which? Paul answered this question in a peculiar manner. He affirmed that he was both a servant and a master. Toward God and his government, the apostle took the position of a subordinate; he called himself the "bondman of Jesus Christ." But on the other hand, with respect to the powers of nature and human nature, he assumed the rank of a superior. "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." Thus he lived a twofold life, as everyone must do, who truly faces the realities of heaven and earth, eternity and time. The ideal character is that which makes of human nature a mountain—rising grandly above the plain of sensuous things, while yet it is dominated entirely by the crystal sphere of the spiritual.

It is a perpetually recurring problem—how to keep the soul and body, the higher and the lower life, in their proper relations to each other. Each is ever striving to rule the other. And this makes the difference which we notice between people. One person sees, another looks; one hears, another listens; one touches, another feels. In the former case there is sensation; in the latter perception.

And what boundless results may flow from these distinctions! Sensation walks through life like an animal, learning nothing, enjoying nothing but the poorest fragment of the world. Perception goes abroad with the artist's eye, the musician's ear, the philosopher's thought, and finds everywhere the treasures of truth opened to it. How can we distinguish between them better than by saying that in the one case a person possesses his senses; in the other he is possessed by them? One man eats to live, another lives to eat. We say of an individual that he keeps his temper, or he is carried away by passion. Self-control is a virtue, self-indulgence is a vice.

A degree higher in the scale of faculty is the gift of language. It is a divine endowment, this power of mental expression in terms of words that may live forever with a life of their own. But here again we have learned to distinguish between use and abuse. Garrulity, verbosity, loquacity are terms which indicate that instead of a person's having a great command of language, language has a great command of him. And what is more wearisome than to hear a man's words run away with him? He goes on talking after he has stopped saying anything. True culture is always shown in that economy of speech which renders language suggestive—it leaves something for the hearer to supply. And more than this. No one can set bounds to the evils of unguarded utterance. Whoever allows the temper to be master and have its own way in speech, will find that the tongue may be "a fire, a world of iniquity." "If any man seemeth to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain."

Another step along the widening circles of human experience leads us within the range of human occupations

—what men do for a living. And here is large occasion for the apostolic principle—"All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any:" i.e. every man should be superior to his work. Whatever it is, he ought not to let it absorb and subdue him. For while all true work requires concentration and consecration of one's best ability, still there may and must be some reserve of the soul unaffected by it. When the workman is mastered by his work, he becomes a mere drudge—without liberty or hope. When a toiler cannot look beyond his toil, it is a prison house to him and will soon be his tomb. And the world is full of Ixions bound to the slow-revolving wheel of routine, the slaves and victims of labor from which they cannot break away. We sometimes say of a man that he has got money: rather say that money has got him. For is he not growing as cold and hard and lifeless as mere coin? How many a conquest thus proves to be a defeat! When Benjamin Franklin heard in Europe that Gen. Howe had captured Philadelphia, he remarked that it might turn out that Philadelphia had captured him. And the event showed that he was right.

Even the noblest engagements may lower the nature if they become monopolists of its powers. Art is an exacting mistress, tolerating no rival. But the highest artists have been those who never surrendered their individuality. There is always a self-possession in genius. Therein it differs from talent. Talent exhausts itself. Genius has no limits. We feel that Angelo could have raised a loftier dome than St. Peter's, and Beethoven's best music was never expressed. It is this unspent and unspendable force which is the background of Shakespeare's dramas, of

Wellington's generalship, and may we not say, of Jesus' love?

The same may be said of the reasoning faculties. The man who possesses his ideas is a true thinker, the man who is possessed by them is liable to perversions of thought. A reasonable person is one who always maintains a calm and candid judgment, subjecting his mind to the higher law of truth, and so is always superior to his own mental operations. But there are those who fall under the power of their own ideas, and may thus become monomaniacs in their absorption in some one cause or conception. It is true that the pioneers and reformers of the world have always been specialists—men of one idea. But is it not also true that genuine reforms have required the assistance of the conservative to offset the radical element?

There is a sense in which Truth may be a help or a hindrance to the life. The difference between a scholar and a pedant is that the one has mastered his knowledge, the other is mastered by it. The really learned man has his acquisitions at command, and can use them as he will; the bookworm is oppressed by a mass of undigested erudition. The one translates the lore of the schools into the idiom of his own individuality; the other never gets beyond quotation marks. The philosopher constructs theories, but is always ready to change them at the demand of facts. The sciolist often remains in the bondage of his system—forcing data into accord with it. A sure mark of true culture is that independence of mind which is perfectly consistent with docility of thought. While always subordinate to the claims of truth, it insists on serving truth in its own way and for its own ends. Its motto is “all

things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any," in the sense of becoming a mere receptacle or reflector. This was in fact the position which the Incarnate Word of God took when he said "to this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." He meant that the ancient truth of the Law and the Prophets was to receive a new expression at his hands. Instead of remaining in the fetters of old formalism, it was to be set free with the liberty of the glory of grace. And this is the mission of all witnesses to the truth—to speak the clearer word, enunciate the wider principle, breathe the sweeter music which will make the old ever new and newer to the world.

Once more, the same question must be put with regard to Religion—"shall the soul rule or be ruled by its religious life?" This involves a distinction to be very carefully observed, between Religion and Christianity. The two are not necessarily identical. The former is or may be human, the latter is divine. By Christianity we mean the system of truth which God has revealed through the Bible. By religion is usually meant the form and method which have been given to divine truth by those who receive it. It is the earthly channel through which the heavenly stream flows. Now it goes without the saying that there is sometimes a difference between Religion and Christianity. The one gives us theology—the other presents the truth as it is in Jesus. The former has furnished us with creeds and organizations, the latter with the ideals of New Testament theory and practice. According to the one we are Baptists or Presbyterians—according to the other we are Christians. These distinctions are real and important, nor

are they to be deprecated because of possible perversions. The human interpretations of divine revelation are the necessary result of the present condition of things in this world ; and that they should be fallible or conflicting, is simply due to the state and circumstances of human nature as it is. If we find that the phases of religion vary with different persons and associations, we account for it by the diversity of gifts which the Holy Spirit recognizes in the churches. We see then what Religion is. It is Christianity seen through the medium of particular character and conditions. Of course then, Religion may be fallible while Christianity is faultless. The building which we erect may be open to criticism, but the foundation on which it stands is beyond peradventure. Your opinion about Christ is one thing—Christ himself is another. Believers may and do differ endlessly in their theories and systems ; but they should all agree as to the fundamental truth itself. Christianity needs Religion as the soul needs a body—but the body is not the soul.

Accepting then the forms of faith as the useful conditions of spiritual life, and yet not identical with it, we see in what sense it is true that the Christian should possess his religion, rather than be possessed by it. That is—the letter must be kept subordinate to the spirit. The body must not dominate the soul. To illustrate :—Jesus found that the Jews were the slaves of their religion. They did not possess the scriptures, but were mastered by them, so as to worship every dot and dash as sacred. They did not possess a temple ; they were ruled by it with the tyranny of priest and ritual. They had not a system of faith ; it held them bound by rigid lines of tradition and formal ecclesiology. Therefore it was the work, the hard

and painful work of Christ and the Apostles, to break down this old religiousness, and set men free from the bondage of the law. They taught that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. The formula of the Pharisees, "touch not, taste not, handle not," was to be displaced by the freedom of the Gospel. Paul found continual occasion for insisting that Christ had set men free from the formalities of the faith. "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any," was a rule of life which the Jew needed to learn, for it was not natural to him.

Yet it is as difficult to practice now as it was then. Have we not seen christians whose religion was in some respects a bondage rather than an inspiration? The Puritan of New England was literally the slave of his sabbatical notions—he could not even smile or pluck a flower on the Lord's Day, because of his ideas of duty. The Anti-Mission Baptists were in a similar state of captivity to their Calvinistic belief in the sovereignty of grace, by which they were prevented from engaging in the great evangelistic movements of modern times. So were the Quakers or Friends restricted by the severity of their nonconformity, to a much narrower range of religious liberty than they were entitled to. We have known sincere believers who were under the yoke of tradition—so devoted to the religious practices of the past that they could not adapt themselves to modern changes, and were thus disabled for aggressive work. Others are possessed by a morbid conscience, or an uninstructed moral judgment which gives them abnormal ideas of duty, out of all sympathy with life as it is being lived at the present time. Others are so bound fast to the letter of the word that

they have no freedom of interpretation, no power to read the Bible by the new lights of advancing knowledge.

These cases are typical. They show that the Christian may put his religion in the wrong place. He is its subject, its slave—and the consequences may be deplorable. For the Tempter is always at hand to pervert religion when it becomes the ruler. He drives it to extremes which aggravate the difference between it and Christianity. He leads the believer to think that his views of truth are identical with the truth itself. Thus man becomes an arbiter of duty for himself and others, and soon feels that he is entitled to enforce his theories as the law of abstract right. In this way is gradually evolved the Critic, the Censor, Judge, Persecutor.

Ruler or ruled—which? this question takes hold of the vital conception of letter and spirit, form and life, as they are interrelated in our thoughts and living. The christian who holds his Religion in due subordination to his Christianity, is one who has entered into the liberty where-with Christ makes his people free. He accepts and uses a certain theology, but he will not insist on that particular system as being the only one which Christians should adopt. He subscribes to a given creed, but he does not makes of its tenets a shibboleth of universal judgment. He belongs to and cordially serves one church or denomination, but he is not so absorbed in it as to have no fellowship for members of other communions. He holds fast to the religious routine which he has received from the past, and yet he is ready to modify it with adaptations to present and future progress. He cherishes the Bible as a rule of faith and practice, but he never refuses to read its pages in the new light which the works of God throw on

his word. He obeys the dictates of Experience, but always with margin left for the voices of Hope and Faith.

Such a Christian is not a volatile person, blown about and carried away by any wind that blows; and yet like a skillful mariner he is bound to avail himself of every change of wind to help him on his way. He knows that no two days are alike, and he cannot depend on yesterday for tomorrow's guidance. So he prays each morning the old prayer which yet is ever new—"give us this day our daily bread," and he finds that as of old, the manna lies bright with the dew each morning on the grass. God's mercies are new every morning and fresh every evening. His grace is always timely, opportune. That is what Christianity means—an ever running stream of the river that flows from underneath the throne. Man's religion is often a pool of standing water, waveless and changeless, without power of progress, sure to stagnate into superstition.

The difference between holding one's Religion and being held by it is the difference between spiritual freedom and slavery. The one is progressive and versatile, the other is fixed and futile. As to which of the two is demanded by the church and the world, there can be no doubt. For all things are hurrying onward with increased velocity as

"The great world spins forever
Down the ringing grooves of change."

The preaching and practice of the Gospel adapted to the past generation no longer serves, for the problems of thought are new, the attacks on the faith are different, the forms of evil have been altered, and the consequent needs of Christianity are not what they once were.

Now is the time therefore to see whether we rule our Religion or are ruled by it. If we are so fond of the old ways and our own personal habits, that we can make no new adjustments of religious life, but must go on as we have done, and as we prefer, it is a sure sign that we are in bondage to the past. Religion is to us a house to live in, not a car to travel with. Our usefulness is over, and the sooner we are called to our rest, the better for the world.

But if we feel the pressure of the great forward movements of the age, its new questions and difficulties and needs, and if our hearts respond with a willingness to adjust our life to the new conditions, even at the cost of self-sacrifice, this is evidence that our Religion is a matter of growth and sympathy. It is one branch of the great flowing river of Christianity, always full and fresh and free. Religion is not a fetter about our limbs, it is an inspiration in our hearts. We belong to the future, and the world cannot spare us yet.

IX.

MIRIAM.

"Miriam, the Prophetess."—Ex. 15:20,

MIRIAM is the Mary of the Old Testament. The names are identical, though the Hebrew and Greek forms differ. The original root conveys the idea of "bitterness," as appears in the marah of the brackish waters in the wilderness, and the title Mara, chosen by Naomi to describe her forlorn and sorrowful plight. It is true that the name Mary is now hallowed forever by the honors of the Virgin Mother. But it should be remembered that even she attained to her glory only through much tribulation. Miriam, the Hebrew and original appellation, was a name born of a melancholy time. It was one of the bitter fruits of the bondage in Egypt, bestowed on a child of slaves whose hearts were broken and bleeding.

Amram and Jochebed were a wedded pair of the tribe of Levi, who lived toward the close of the long and dark oppression. Heirs of the promise of a Divine Covenant, they had experienced the abysmal humiliation of the clay-fields and the lash, where they had seen their kindred perish like animals in the dirt. They had heard the terrible decree of extermination, and had seen babes torn from their mothers' arms and put to death. All this, and more that cannot be imagined, of cruelty and suffering. No wonder then that to their first-born (happily a female) they had given the name Miriam: it was a slave's protest and

monument against the "bitterness" of his lot. But in so doing they only furnished a new occasion for that overruling Providence, whose benign compensations give to the sufferer "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Thus Miriam comes before us. She first appears as a child, ten years of age. Daughter of sorrow, meanly clad, with the grime of servile labor on her little hands and feet, she stands in pathetic relief against the dark background of a people's misery. All around her the hovels of the slave, the brickyards of their task-masters, the graves of thousands of unpitied dead. This picture has, however, a larger and brighter frame, in the pride and power of Egypt glowing grandly under the Tropic sun. Far and wide along the sacred valley of the Nile, stand the cities and monuments and temples of the greatest nation in the world. But all that magnificence was as nothing to the degraded Hebrews, who saw in it only the elaboration of their terrible prison house. Perhaps they imbibed from that dread contrast, the aversion to the fine arts which has been a national characteristic of the Jews to the present day. (All of the sacred buildings of Palestine were the work of foreign architects.) And little Miriam, standing amid the reeds by the river bank, has no thought for the lordly structures of temple and palace around her.

What is she doing there—so near the edge of the great yellow stream? She is watching something that lies among the papyrus plants not far away. What is it? An open basket-like fabric of woven reeds, coated externally with bitumen that will resist the water, and lined with soft stuffs within, contains an infant form carefully wrapped and bestowed in that fragile receptacle. What can this

mean? Oh the pity of it!—the cruel story of jealous hate which has consigned all the male children of the slaves to destruction! a doom to escape which the parents of Miriam have devised this means of saving their first boy. But how will this avail—such an exposure to the elements and the perils of the river? Look closely and you will see evidences of careful planning here. This is no public place, open to anyone: nor is it a wild spot where prowlers might come. It is the appointed resort of royalty, whither the king's daughter comes for her regular bath, with her retinue. A pavilion and special facilities for such purposes are at hand. This particular place must have been well-known, as being thus highly favored; and as such it had been selected by the Hebrew mother, as the scene of an experiment which the Lord had suggested to her mind. This was nothing less than to put her babe in the path of royal observation, with the hope that some ray of royal favor might thus fall upon it. A daring plan indeed!—one which no slave's heart could have devised of itself. How remote the contingency of help which it looked toward! The probabilities were, humanly speaking, altogether against the success of such a maternal stratagem. But Divine Providence had shaped that mother's thought, and was now presiding over that little treasure—apparently placed by accident, but really with the most thoughtful attention, just where it was on the river's edge. As another part of the plot, the little girl is stationed near by, to watch the progress of events and report to her waiting mother, who remains somewhere in the background; but not far away, we may be sure.

Thus Miriam stands—a guardian, a sentinel. She little knows the tremendous nature of her trust, that she is

keeping watch over the fortunes of the future—the most momentous charge of history. But her position is a very anxious one. She knows not what to look for. The king's daughter may come, for this is her regular bathing place ; and yet she may not. Others may come—a patrol of soldiers, or some vagrant, or even a crocodile from the river (although that is not probable here.) Even if the royal lady does appear, how will she treat the poor waif lying there so helpless ? and what can Miriam do in any case ? Such are a few of the thoughts that must have kept the child's mind in confusion. She can only pray to her mother's God for help in this her lone crisis. So she waits and waits—through the slow and weary hours ; until at last a sound is heard, of approaching movement. It is the retinue of the royal household—it is the imperial lady herself. They enter the pavilion near the river, and soon emerge attired for the water. They pass down among the reeds to the stream, Miriam creeping after them, all eye and ear. Presently she hears an exclamation. She steps forth and joins the throng which is gathered about the little ark, and gazing on its beautiful contents. No woman could resist such a spectacle, and those Egyptian hearts are melted.

Now is the divine opportunity ; and the same Spirit who suggested to the mother this experiment, moves the daughter to its consummation. "This is one of the Hebrew children !" exclaims Thermuthis, the royal lady. And at once she sees a peasant girl step forward and ask in timid tones, "Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" And she said, go. Then fleet as an arrow the girl speeds away to the waiting mother—not far distant we may be

sure—and soon brings her back to the royal presence. “Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages,” is a commission which Jochebed receives with humble mien, carefully concealing the bursting joy of her triumphant heart.

And so the little group go away to their poor home, silently and modestly; but once there, what raptures of grateful ecstasy over the success of the maternal stratagem, in the salvation of their darling and his pledged security! And of them all, the gladdest and the proudest is Miriam, whose presence of mind and fearless forwardness had been the means of meeting the crisis so wisely. If she had been unready or unwise at the critical moment, all had failed. But to say and do just the right thing at the right time, that was the achievement of the Hebrew girl, for which all after ages have had occasion to honor her name. Her word was one of the pivots of the world’s history.

At this point we lose sight of her for a time. But we can easily imagine her in that now happy home, the invaluable helper of her mother in caring for the babe whom she had rescued for a royal fortune. How proud her task and even joyous all its petty drudgery! Thus passed the few years of the nursery life of young Moses: and when the time came for his promotion to the royal household, he went thither with a spiritual education, in the truths of God to which not only his mother but his sister had contributed.

This story is unique in the Bible as the only record of girlhood which it contains. We find many narratives of boyhood in the Scriptures;—the early days of Joseph, Samuel, David, Daniel, Jesus, and Timothy, are described fully or partially. But is there any other girlhood than



that of Miriam depicted there—unless we include the episode of the little maid in the household of Naaman? We read of maidens such as Jephthah's daughter, Ruth, Esther, and the daughter of Herodias; but they are not of tender years. It is well therefore that we have this picture of a little girl occupying a place in the Divine Economy. And what a place! that she should be the guardian and sentinel of the most important crisis that ever occurred in the Old Dispensation! It was the fidelity to her trust, the courage and readiness of Miriam, that formed the hinge on which the great gate of Providence began to turn for the opening of a new era.

We welcome then girlhood to the service and honors of the kingdom of heaven on earth. Let no one think that to stand beside the cradle and keep watch over infancy, is necessarily a trivial matter. Miriam is not the only daughter of bitterness who has been the means of ushering sweetness into this world. If we look behind the publicity of great men and events, we often find a pure and peaceful home, where not only a mother's heart but a sister's hand has been a ruling influence. The daughter has a peculiar position in the home. No boy can be to the parents what a girl may be. And piety is never so beautiful and useful as in the life of the maiden—that she should be a consecrated soul, devoted to God and to her kindred. No one can tell how early the crisis of destiny may come to her. At the age of ten Miriam met the great occasion of her life; and she was equal to it, she knew just what to do and say, because she was a true daughter of the covenant people—poor and lowly in their humiliation, but strong and brave with their religion. Girl-

hood as well as womanhood has need to pray the daily prayer "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"

Our next view of Miriam occurs after the lapse of eighty years. When Moses returned from the wilderness where he had been exiled on account of his preference for the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, he came back commissioned as the Champion of Israel. He had been, during forty years, a scholar in that great university of silence and seclusion where so many of God's heroes have been trained—Elijah, John Baptist, Jesus and Paul. There he had learned a higher lore than "the wisdom of Egypt." He was endowed with the culture which he was afterward to use as Lawgiver and Leader of the people. On his return to Egypt he looked first for his kindred. But the home of his childhood was gone. Father and mother had long ago departed to that rest which this world had denied them.

There remained however his elder sister Miriam and his younger brother Aaron. But how changed were they! It is a grayhaired woman that we see now in place of the little girl of the past. At least ninety years have left their traces on her person and character. Yet she is not bent and withered as persons ordinarily are at her age. Tradition says that the family of Moses were treated by the government with special favor for his sake, and that peculiar gifts of physical preservation were bestowed on them by Jehovah. This may explain the phrase "Miriam the Prophetess," and also account for the fact that Aaron showed himself to be an accomplished orator. Evidently the family of Amram had not suffered all the degradation of the slaves of the brick fields. The term "prophetess," as applied to Miriam, should

not be misunderstood. It does not indicate necessarily the gift of prediction ; for the prophet of the Old Testament was chiefly a forth-teller, a revealer of truth and teacher of men. In the case of Miriam it denotes that she possessed the spirit of poetry and music—endowments which were always regarded by the Hebrews as of supernatural inspiration. Miriam's claim to this distinction appeared in the following manner.

After the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, when the redeemed of the Lord stood in safety on the further shore, and saw the waters rolling over the grave of their enemies, a great festival of thanksgiving was celebrated. In formal convocation the people engaged in a jubilee of praise to Jehovah for his wonderful works in their behalf. Moses as director, divides the host into two parties, male and female, and then furnishes each section with an Ode composed by himself, to be sung responsively by them. This is done. On the plain that borders the sea, within full sight of the waters of the exodus, Moses and the men lift up their voices in the chant

“ I will sing unto the Lord,
For he hath triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

Then Miriam the prophetess and the women take up the strain and respond, to the music of timbrels and dancing,

“ Sing ye to the Lord,
For he hath triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

Thus verse after verse of the noble hymn was rendered as in a grand antiphonal service, and the wilderness rang with the hallelujahs of the free. This great “ service

of song" was the first instance on record of an organized praise meeting. Observe the part taken by Miriam. She is the leader of the women and as such is called a "prophetess"—showing that she had been to the people a Teacher, a Monitress—inspiring them with hope in the future and with faith in the promises of God. She had sung songs of cheer for them in the house of their bondage, and had brightened with her consolations their dreary prospects. These offices were the fruit of divine inspiration. Miriam's commission was in its way as useful, if not as prominent, as that of her great brother. It was her part to keep alive in Hebrew hearts the sparks of hope which he was afterward to blow into a flame. She was thus the first of a long line of heroines to whom history owes some of its noblest productions—Deborah, Hannah, Hulda, the wife of Isaiah, Anna and the daughters of Philip. These illustrious women of the Bible were each a prophetess, in the sense of making known to the people the consolations of Jehovah, or of interpreting his will in sacred song. Who can tell how many a heart was cheered and helped by their effusions.

Miriam was also the first of a line of champions of her sex who have shown what part woman can take in the public life of society and nations. All along the suffering ages we see and hear them, from Zenobia and Boadicea to Joan of Arc and Maria Theresa. It is the prophetess who has voiced the divine thought in poetry and literature—singers such as Barbauld and Hemans and Browning and Steele; who has advocated the cause of the oppressed—Mrs. Jackson for the Indians, Mrs. Stowe for the slaves, Miss Willard for the inebriate, Miss Dix for the insane, Miss Barton for the destitute, Miss Smith for the

work women. Are not such reformers truly inspired to utter the divine thought—to be heralds of new eras to the world? Whatever may be the wisdom of the conservative spirit which would silence woman in the churches and forbid her a part in political life, it is the testimony of history that her voice has been heard in every age by the world at large. And there only needs a proper adjustment of the sexes to each other, to realize the ideal of the Red Sea celebration—Moses and Miriam, each the leader of half the host, each responding to the other and both contributing to the praise of God! Thus should man and woman ever stand as part and counterpart, strophe and anti-strophe in that perfect life which will be as “the service of song in the house of the Lord.”

We have now to enter upon the third and last section of this biography. Its picture is a darker and sadder one than those preceding it. In the new nation to which the Exodus had given birth, Miriam's position was one of great influence and honor. Her connection with the Chief Magistrate, her personal endowment of specially inspired gifts, her useful and beautiful life, her many years and peculiar dignity, all contributed to elevate her to a place of well-deserved authority. She was a Mother in Israel—the first lady in the camp. And no one could blame her for accepting and enjoying the special honors thus accruing to her.

But alas for human nature! its elevation is always a perilous thing, full of moral liability. And so it came to pass that Miriam's heart was tainted with pride and self-seeking ere she knew it. Her prosperity had relaxed her spiritual caution, and temptation found the weak place in her moral armor. The story tells that when Moses brought

his wife into the camp, both Miriam and Aaron were offended at her ; perhaps because, as an Ethiopian, she was a member of an inferior race ; perhaps, because they feared that she might detract from their importance in the eyes of the people. At any rate the fact was that they both “spake against Moses.” In private and in public they indulged in censorious remarks about him and his companion. They set in motion rumors of detraction, and gave means to the gossips of the camp for all the scandal which such busy bodies always delight in. Miriam seems to have been the first and chief agent in this work, leading Aaron and employing him in it.

Now this was a strange thing for a lady of rank and years to be guilty of. But who can set bounds to the influence of jealousy and ambition, or arrest the virus of selfishness once active in the human heart? It is corrupt and corrupting, sparing nothing. It will drag down and despoil the loftiest nature. Lucifer, son of the morning, fell from heaven through pride, and Miriam the prophetess became its victim also. For when she and her brother had gone so far as to impeach the supreme authority of their brother —“Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?” there was one hearer of their words whom they did not consider—“The Lord heard it.” And soon came his reply in tremendous form.

Moses, Aaron and Miriam are summoned to appear before Jehovah in the Tabernacle. Then the mysterious cloud comes down and overshadows all with its solemn gloom, and from out its dark recess a voice is heard—“Hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision and will speak to him in a dream (indicating that Miriam and

Aaron had received this kind of inspiration ; it was however of an inferior description.) “ But my servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house ; with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even plainly and not in dark speeches. Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses ? ”

Thus the preeminence of the Lawgiver is divinely asserted, and Miriam and Aaron are convicted of rebellion against the Most High in their criticism of the Head of the Nation. And then punishment falls, swift and terrible. The mysterious gloom which has enveloped the little group departs, the air is clear again : but lo—Miriam stands stricken with leprosy, white as snow ! The people gaze with horror at the pitiable sight, their Queen-mother, the august heroine of their race, now a thing of loathesome repulsiveness. Moses and Aaron both plead for mercy, but in vain. The woman has sinned and she must suffer—probably she rather than Aaron, because of her leadership in the sin. Forth from the camp she must go, outlawed and degraded, not to return until the legal term of defilement has expired. And this is done. The camp remains silent and lonesome during her absence, all the people coming beneath the stern shadow of a common doom. Then the curse is removed from her and she is restored, contrite and humble, to her friends.

But never again could Miriam be what she had been, the proud and peerless Leader of the women of Israel. Never again could she wear the white crest of a stainless fame. Thenceforth she must walk with the bowed head of one who had sinned and suffered. Perhaps this rendered her all the more sympathetic and helpful toward her kind, as it enabled her to understand and share the ills of hu-

manity. Like David and Peter she became softened and sweetened under the pressure of chastening, and her harp gave forth the precious minstrelsy which only the hand of pain can evoke. For all the best singers of the church have learned in suffering what they taught in song, and the Psalms of the wilderness which flowed from the broken heart of Miriam, were tenderly touching because of her bitter experience.

So let us think of her in her last days, as of one made wise by sorrow and sanctified by loss. She walked with her people through the long years of their pilgrimage, a mother to the last. And when, on the borders of Kadesh, within sight of the green hills of the Promised Land which she, like her brothers, might not enter, she found the end of life, the people mourned for her with great lamentation, and her tomb was one of the shrines of the wilderness until long after the days of Christ.

As we take leave of this romantic story, so full of pathos, let one of its most impressive lessons remain with us, the *criminality of slander*. It is against the sins of the tongue that Miriam's history should warn us. Her temptation was in the line of her gifts, and as she was a teacher and singer in Israel, so was her liability and infirmity found in evil speaking. A fault this—how common with her sex, although not peculiar to them! Against it the ninth commandment was uttered long ago, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” Slander is of many kinds—misrepresentation or disparagement, imputation of wrong motives, or detraction from good fame. Perhaps it

writes anonymous letters, conveying criticism that dare not speak openly. Or it whispers by the way a word that lodges like evil seed in human soil. Or it takes refuge behind "they say," "it is reported," "have you heard the news," and thus it spreads poison at second hand. It may write the leader of a newspaper for which no one seems to be responsible. But of whatever kind or method, false witnessing is a sin which comes direct from the father of lies, who is called in Scripture the "accuser of the brethren."

As such the God of Truth condemns and punishes it. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among my people." A good name is more precious than riches; and whoever defaces a reputation unjustly, steals the immediate jewels of a soul, a robbery which not enriches him and makes the owner poor indeed. Needless to say how often society by its conventionalities encourages the habit of gossip which insensibly inclines to the possibility of evil speaking. But whenever we are tempted to depreciatory remarks or to detraction of any kind, let us remember the fault and the fate of Miriam. Every conversation, every word in public or in private has one listener too often ignored—"the Lord heard it." And from him come the warnings—"take heed to thy words." "If any man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain."

There is a place for just criticism, however severe; even for accusation and reproach at times, in the interests of truth. But even then the word of condemnation should be uttered in the spirit of Christ, firmly but tenderly, and with hope not of mere castigation, but of reclaiming from the wrong. How often did Moses point out the faults and

sins of the people, and upbraid them with their misconduct! yet always with the wise severity of paternal discipline.

“Brother, even if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

X.

THE PULPIT—ANCIENT AND MODERN.

“And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood which they had made for the purpose.”—NEH. 8:4.

THIS is the first appearance in history, and it is the only mention in the Bible, of the pulpit as a means used in the publication of the word of God. In modern times the pulpit is an institution almost inseparably connected with the proclamation of the Gospel. Preacher and Pulpit are nearly synonymous terms. But not so in ancient times. The public presentation of divine truth has always been a feature of the kingdom of heaven on earth, but the sermon in our sense of the term—a formal religious discourse with text or topic—is a modern invention. And the pulpit as a special place and means for such uses, was unknown to the inspired writers and speakers.

The preaching of the word of the Lord by human lips for human ears, has been a means of grace in all ages. Noah was “a preacher of righteousness.” Moses and Samuel filled the same office. Solomon called himself “I the preacher.” The Psalmist said “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation.” The Prophets were professional preachers. Jonah was commissioned “go preach the preaching that I bid thee.” But this was not done according to our ways and means. The preacher was not confined to any one place or assembly; he had no prepared platform and desk; nor was he expected to shape his

words into scientific form. The spokesman of God in the old dispensation went about among the people and delivered his message, whatever it was, to them wherever he found them.

The only exception to this rule in the Old Testament, appears in our text, which refers to the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem under Nehemiah. After assembling them in their ancient capital, he proceeded to refresh their minds with a publication of the law of God, which they had lost during their exile. And to this end Ezra (one of the "scribes" or writers whose business it was to transcribe and preserve the sacred writings) was directed to read the rolls to the people. In order to facilitate this work, a wooden staging was erected in the public square, on which Ezra, assisted by six priests on his right hand and seven on his left, could stand and be seen and heard by the multitude. Then they stood and read aloud their Bible (consisting of the Pentateuch) for six hours to the great congregation. "They read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the meaning."

This is the first and last mention in the Bible of a pulpit. It does not appear in the New Testament, although the preacher is there more prominent than any other figure. John Baptist was a herald of salvation, and Jesus of Nazareth was anointed to preach the Gospel to the meek. But they had no set place or time or method. The apostles were sent forth to preach the Gospel to every creature but they were confined to no particular buildings or positions. In the synagogues, on Mars Hill, in the market place, to the eunuch in his chariot—wherever there were souls that would listen, there the preacher found his audi-

ence. Indeed there was at first no separate class of preachers, for all believers were included in the great commission. Whoever had received the truth was authorized to proclaim it to others. As it is written of the members of the churches after the persecution—"they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." It was this personal and universal propagandism of the truth which was the means of its speedy diffusion through the Roman Empire.

How then did the Pulpit, as we now see it, and the professional Preacher, as now employed, come to have the central and commanding position now occupied by them? This question is well worth considering, for it involves a very interesting chapter in the history of religious evolution.

For at least a hundred years after the apostles had passed away, the Christian church was mainly a missionary church—engaged in spreading the Gospel through the world, and in establishing itself among the nations. The organization of each body of believers was of the simplest character—having only elders and deacons as officers, and conducting religious service after the manner of the synagogues. Their meetings were held at first daily, then weekly on the first day: and they consisted of general praise and prayer and the reading of the scriptures. Addresses were made by some of the elders, or by any one of the members who had received the gift of exhortation, or was moved by the Spirit to speak to the edification of the members. Gradually a distinction came to be made between the ruling and the preaching elders, and certain persons were set aside for the office of public instruction. This became necessary as the churches were developed into permanent

and growing bodies needing particular leadership and regular religious training. But preaching in the modern sense of the term began with Origen (186-253) a Greek teacher in the Theological Seminary at Alexandria. He originated the scientific study of the Bible, or Exegesis, and gave to Christian scholarship its first great impulse. With him the sermon began to take its place as a carefully prepared discourse on a particular topic. He was followed by an era of great preachers who gave to the Gospel a new place in the history of oratory. Among the Greeks, the name of Chrysostom of Constantinople was most eminent. He revived the golden age of Athenian eloquence, of Demosthenes and Pericles. As examples of fervid emotional elocution, the sermons of the “golden mouthed” have never been surpassed even to this day. In the Western part of the Roman World, Ambrose, Augustine and others were equally prominent. Augustine was a renowned Theologian. He gave to doctrinal discourses their first celebrity, although his expositions of Scripture were inclined to mystical and fanciful methods.

It was about this time that the “pulpit” appeared and became a fixture in the church establishment. It was necessary to the eminence of the preacher. As the classic orators had the “bema” of Athens, or the “rostra” of Rome, so the Christian speaker needed a distinctive place from which to be seen and heard by all. The name “pulpit” was taken from the “pulpitum”—the front of the stage where the actor stood to declaim his part; and thenceforth every ecclesiastical edifice had some such platform consecrated to the proclamation of the truth. All through the Middle Ages, in every Basilica, Cathedral or Chapel, this feature was prominent in the architecture.

They may be seen still—of carved wood or sculptured stone, sometimes lofty and ornate, sometimes a mere standing place, but always indicating the prominence of the Word in the sanctuary.

The preacher however did not keep pace with the pulpit. With the rise of ritualism, the office of preaching steadily ebbed ;—as to this day, where the liturgy prevails, the sermon is usually at a disadvantage. Through what we call the Dark Ages the voice of the preacher declined ; although at intervals such an exhibition of his power as that of Peter the Hermit in arousing the Crusades, showed what the office was capable of accomplishing.

The revival of preaching as a general exercise took place when the Waldenses and Albigenses began to protest against Rome and their faithful pastors restored the apostolic office of evangelists. In order to counteract their influence the Papacy organized the Dominicans, an order of monk-preachers specially prepared for popular efficiency. Their success was great in reestablishing the power of the Papacy among the common people. Many of the pulpit orators of those times were true preachers. Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura and Savonarola were splendid specimens of sacred eloquence. Anthony of Padua (1195-1232) is said to have been the originator of the modern method of logical sermonizing, analyzing a topic and treating it by division and subdivision.

It is needless to say that the Reformation was prepared for and conducted by a revival of apostolic preaching. Wiclif filled England with his “poor priests,” who went about among the people preaching to them in their own language ; and Wessel in Germany, Waldo in France, Huss in Bohemia repeated the heralding of John Baptist.

It was by the fiery philippics of Luther from the pulpit, and the stormy appeals of John Knox, and the logical sermons of Calvin, that evangelical religion was revived in Europe. From that day to this the voice of the pulpit has been the most prominent agency of Christianity. Romanism gives to the altar and the Priest the central place in the sanctuary; but Protestantism has always honored the pulpit and the preacher as the shrine and oracle of divine truth in the world.

Who can estimate the influence on English history of such men as Taylor, Baxter, South, Bunyan, Wesley, Whitefield, Hall and Spurgeon?—or on Scotland of its glorious orators, Chalmers, Guthrie, McLeod and Candlish? The state church of France, even under the Romish tyranny of the Bourbons, was graced by the splendid pulpit talent of Bossuet, Fenelon and Massillon. In this country we shall never know what our institutions have owed to the pulpit power of men like Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, Payson, Hopkins, Alexander, Barnes, Lyman Beecher, Finney, Fuller, Leland, Cone and many others of the anointed prophets of the Lord. But it is to be observed that many changes have marked the history of the pulpit during the progress of Protestantism.

As has been said, Romanism has always made the pulpit secondary to the altar. It is the latter with its candles and statuary and picturesque effect, which is supreme in every Catholic church; while the pulpit is at one side, an elevated enclosure attached to the wall or a pillar. This shows that the Word of God is subordinate to the worship of the Mass and the Virgin. Protestantism restored the reading of the word and the proclamation of the truth to its original preeminence, so that the pulpit is

always the main feature of the Christian sanctuary. But for a long time it remained at a distance from the people ; as may be seen in old churches yet remaining where the pulpit is a lofty box-like place midway between the floor and the ceiling. The gradual liberalizing of Christian thought may be traced by the lowering of the pulpit to its present plan—of a platform raised just enough above the audience to command their attention.

This transition indicates also the passage of the minister's office from one of exclusiveness and authority, to that of a sympathetic blending with humanity. The days of clerical garb and official prerogative are passed. The minister of the Gospel is now expected to be a man among men, depending on the truth alone for what authority he may exert.

So with the sermon. It has gone through a long series of phases in form and force—as was to be expected. There can be no one standard type of preaching for all times and places, because each age needs an adaptation of the truth to its particular conditions. The style and spirit appropriate to one era may be entirely out of place in its successor. The polemic theology of the Augustinian school gave place for this reason, to the metaphysical abstractions of the mediaeval logicians; these to the fiery harangues of the Reformers ; these to the elaborate doctrinal discussions of the seventeenth century ; these to the ethical essays of the modern pulpit ; and these in turn to the evangelistic address of the present day. The typical sermon of our time is of a practical bent and a personal persuasive force. What is needed now is the Gospel translated into the terms of common life. The popular demand is for divine truth in the shape of reformatory principles and general ap-

plicability. Specific intellectualism is not in vogue. The discussion of the mysterious problems of good and evil does not interest the Christian public. The preacher of today is called on for two things most of all—the salvation of the soul from sin, and the rectification of the world from error and evil. So that there are two classes of successful preaching—one purely evangelistic, such as that of Spurgeon and Moody; and the other edifying and reformatory, like that of Gordon, Boardman and Brooks.

It may be said, with this understanding, that the range of the modern pulpit is not as large and liberal to-day as it has been. The Christian preacher no longer has the monopoly of religious instruction and authority once possessed by him, as in the days of Wiclif or Wesley's itenerants or the New England parish clergyman. But this is because Christianity has developed other forces dormant then. The religious newspaper and literature, the Sunday School teacher, the lecturer and mission-worker have entered the field once occupied solely by the pulpit, and are sharing its influence. Still there remains the unapproachable power of public oratory, and the inalienable privilege of the ambassador for Christ. Nothing does or can or ever will take the place of that personal proclamation of the Gospel, which is given alone to him who stands between the heavens and the earth as a mediator. That the pulpit is still capable of holding its own among the moral forces of the world as a "leader and commander to the people," is evident from the popularity and power of preachers who could be named in all of our large cities. Who or what could draw the crowds that for years thronged the Tabernacle of London or Tremont Temple and Trinity Church Boston, or the auditoriums of MacArthur

and Hall of New York? What voice of statesman or editor was once more potent in this country than Beecher's? What reformer has won a prouder name than Parkhurst?

But the question for the church now to answer is, how can the Christian pulpit be kept abreast of all the rapid movements of modern progress? Other modes of religious work are being developed as never before, and all the forces of error are multiplying fast. In order not to be left behind, the preacher must exert himself with renewed energy, and the church should see to it that certain conditions of success be carefully provided.

1. The one supreme need of the clerical profession is *the inspiration of the Holy Ghost*. This was the original endowment from the Head of the Church to his Apostles, and it remains the indispensable crown of their commission. Without a personal and profound spirituality, at once divine and human, all of the lore of the schools and the resources of elocutionary art may be only a hindrance to the Gospel. Let the churches continually pray for the descent of this fire of Pentecost upon the preacher.

2. The pulpit must never relax its hold on *the Bible*. There is every temptation now to substitute Theology, Exegesis, religious science, for the original word of God. But while all the helps of human learning are useful to the preacher, he should never forget that his first duty is to "preach the word." Nothing can take the place of this "sword of the spirit" in our warfare with sin. In all ages the divine blessing has been given to nothing as to this.

3. The modern pulpit should be chiefly *evangelistic*. The first duty of the preacher is to "disciple all nations,"

to seek and save the lost. The conversion of souls is the chief end of Christ and his Gospel; and it should be the leading purpose of all preaching, to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified for the salvation of men by the cross.

4. It must be remembered that the preacher of today is usually a *Pastor* and as such is directly responsible for the building up of the church. He must not only be the means of saving souls but of educating and establishing them. *Edification* is therefore the continuous duty of the pulpit. But in an age when the average culture of the masses is steadily rising, and the Christian public requires more and more extensive instruction, the preacher is called on for an ever enlarging sphere of exercise. He must be able to translate old truths into new language and adjust the Bible to the current conditions of thought. This being so, we ask for greater freedom for the pulpit. Why should the sermon be of one stereotyped mould? why preach from but one passage of Scripture, and pursue a beaten path of homiletical treatment? The textual method of sermonizing is a modern invention. Christ and his apostles were free to find their texts and topics everywhere, as the spirit guided them; and the preacher of today is at liberty to use life, society, art, science, for material with which to serve the Gospel in its address to human souls. Indeed we must make Divine truth as broad as humanity and as varied as nature, if we would give it full scope in this world.

Why should preaching be limited to a particular class of persons? There is need always for the regularly ordained and endowed ministry, but there is a demand for more work than they can perform. As in the apostolic days all believers were preachers on occasion, so now we

should utilize the laity of the church, whenever possible, for the service of the Gospel. Rather let the sacerdotal distinction between clergy and laity be discarded, and let the preaching of the word be as general as the Holy Spirit and our needs may permit. Why should we confine preaching to the sanctuary? The pulpit of the Apostles was anywhere and of any kind that could command the ears of men. As Jesus sat in a boat and preached, and Paul stood up in the jail and preached, and Philip rode in the chariot and preached, so should the Gospel find its proclamation now in any place and by any means. He is no true servant of the word who can do nothing apart from his familiar desk and manuscript. The world is full of pulpits waiting to be occupied—on the street corners of crowded cities, amid the smoke and glare of bar-rooms and music halls, out on the prairies or in the woods, by the side of sick beds and in humble households ; and the real herald of the cross will adapt his sermon to the few as to the many, to any one who needs it.

Would that we might see in this country a revival of the spirit of those *pioneer preachers* who during and after the colonial period, sowed the seeds of Christianity all through the backwoods and along the frontiers. To them we owe the foundations of our present religious prosperity ; such men as Lorenzo Dow, with all of his eccentricities, an Elijah of the wilderness ; or in our own annals, Asahel Hosmer of New York, John M. Peck, who rode 1200 miles, from Connecticut to Missouri, in his own wagon, to preach to the settlers there ; Loomis of Michigan, who traveled 45,000 miles on foot, as a Home Missionary ; Fisher and Johnson, who made the overland journey to Oregon at the peril of their lives ; Freeman, who planted our stand-

ard at Fort Dearborn on the future site of Chicago. These are specimens of a class of itinerant evangelists who are needed today for the christianizing of the waste places of our land.

We live in an advanced stage of the great Christian evolution. Never did the sun shine down upon so many noble church edifices, replete with all the conveniences of religious use, adorned and adapted beyond anything the fathers dreamed of. Never before was it made so easy to preach the Gospel, or so comfortable to listen to it, or so natural to be moved by it—as in our modern pulpits and sanctuaries. But the Head of the Church looks to his people for something more than this. And they will never realize the ideal of His calling until they make of the whole world a temple for his worship, of every place a pulpit for his Gospel, and of all kinds and conditions of men a congregation to be reached by his truth and saved by his grace.

XI.

THE SECRET OF THE LORD.

"The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant."—Ps. 25:14.

THERE are many secrets in this world and of many kinds ; secrets of nature, time and life. The universe abounds in concealments that provoke our curiosity : e. g. —the ultimate constitution of matter ; the real nature of electricity ; the scenery of the North Pole ; the features of the other side of the moon. Time also presents its problems which are still being studied and not yet solved to the satisfaction of all ; such as the fate of the ten tribes of Israel ; the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews ; the American mound-builders ; who was the Man in the Iron Mask ? who wrote the Letter of Junius ? Life as we live it, abounds in mysteries which are continually stimulating and baffling human inquiry ; such as the question of inheritance, why the innocent should suffer for the guilty and one generation pay the debts of its predecessor ; the inequalities of fortune in the world, why the few are favored and the many disadvantaged ; the problem of being, what is the soul ? whither goes it after death ? where are the departed now ? These are some of the glooms which encircle us, limiting the range of our vision, while they are continually tempting us to enlarge it.

But the text speaks of another kind of mystery—something vaster, darker, and more impressive still.

It is "the Secret of the Lord." It pertains to that supreme wonder of existence which enspheres all other being with the life of Him who "dwelleth in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen or can see." Of that eternal and infinite nature we can only say "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! —how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!" But what then? are we to recoil from this mystery as from something transcending all our powers of discovery, and substituting for the name of God the term "unknowable," be content with a blank philosophy of nescience? By no means; for the "Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." It is possible for man to know something about God. The gates of discovery open heavenward as well as earthward.

But there are conditions to be observed. It is in the spiritual as in the physical world—a price must be paid for admission behind the veil. The investigator in any department of truth is required to obey the laws regnant there; physical truth must be sought by physical means, intellectual truth by intellectual means. In this way America was discovered and the fountains of the Nile; the steam engine was invented and the printing press. By complying with the conditions of historical inquiry, the long buried secrets of Time have been exhumed, and we know the facts about the founding of Rome, the persecution of Socrates, the character of Mohammed, and the motives of Henry VIII. Every kind of mystery must be approached by its particular and appropriate path.

So it is with the Secret of the Lord. It is spiritual, supernatural and divine. Therefore it is to be treated by corresponding methods and means. Grace has its condi-

tions, as matter has. Nature says, experiment and ye shall learn. Time says, investigate and ye shall find. God says, believe and ye shall know. For "the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." This is the condition of divine discovery—that godly fear which is the product of humility and love, and which shows itself by faith and obedience. To nothing else will the doors of heavenly truth ever be opened ; as Jesus said "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Let everyone understand then what the terms of spiritual knowledge are. They are fixed and unalterable. God has a perfect right to prescribe on what conditions he will reveal himself to men. Nature does this:—Truth of any kind exacts of the seeker its own price. We see the propriety of such arrangements, and comply with them. We have no option. It is merely a question of obedience to law whether we shall be wise or ignorant. Why then object to the strict requirements of the Bible—"he that cometh to God must believe that he is;" "without faith it is impossible to please God."

Accepting then these conditions of spiritual knowledge, of divine discovery, let us inquire as to the nature of that "Secret of the Lord" which is with them that fear him. The being of God is not entirely mysterious to us. He has revealed enough concerning himself to furnish us with law and life for our moral history. "The invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; so that they are

without excuse ; because that knowing God, they glorified him not as God." Indeed if the stars were so grouped as to spell the name of the Deity on the nightly sky, or the language of flowers were a reality by which the fields were covered with fragrant words descriptive of his perfection, he could not be more clearly published to his creatures than now, when the heavens declare the glory of God and day unto day uttereth speech of him. But the physical universe would not fully reveal the truth ; its language is too limited and weak. No material emblems can do justice to spiritual realities. There was a thought of God which no wind of Eden whispered to the trees, no mountain shadowed or river syllabled. Sun, moon and stars were not bright enough to convey its beauty. It was dimly suggested to the fallen in the garden. It was hinted to Patriarch and Sage. It was symbolized by rite and ceremony. It was gradually evolved through the administrations of the Old Testament, until it reached its full disclosure in the person and the work of the Son of God who is the Son of Man. Then was opened to the world "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints ; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

There it is, the *Secret of the Lord*: "Christ," the Eternal Son, who emptied himself and took on him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men : "Christ in you," not only incarnate but resident in the believing heart, there to reign as Master and to live as Life : "Christ in you the hope of glory," that we who receive him and live by faith in him should be raised up

together with him and made to sit together in the heavens in Christ Jesus. No wonder that it required a special revelation to disclose such a mystery as this to the world ! It is a glory of grace so far transcending the capacity of nature to express, that a new language must be invented for it ; and therefore the Word that was in the beginning with God and was God, was made flesh in order to convey to men the tremendous truth that God is Love ; and that he so loved the sinner as to sacrifice his own Son in order to save him from sin. Who would ever have expected this of the Infinite Holiness ? who could have asked for it or even deemed it possible ? It reveals a depth and wonder of mercy which bewilder the imagination : even angels "desire to look into it " as a mystery surpassing all that they have ever known of the Most High.

But we must observe that this Secret of the Lord is not made known unconditionally. Jesus the Christ was not recognized, for what he was, by the majority of those whom he addressed. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came to his own, and his own received him not. For then as now and always, "the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Only the eye of faith can discern the truth as it is in Jesus. To the fleshly mind and the unbelieving heart he is still a root out of dry ground, and there is no beauty that we should desire him. For, as intellectual truth remains in darkness to all who do not view it with the opened eye of intelligence, and artistic truth is hidden except to the aesthetic nature, so must spiritual truth be discerned by the awakened soul with its faculties of trustful love. To how many is Christ and his salvation a sealed book, an unopened secret ! and it will always be so

until the conditions of discovery are complied with. Therefore the Gospel is “God’s wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory ; which none of the rulers of this world knoweth, as it is written ‘things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit ; for the Spirit searcheth all things even the deep things of God.’ ”

When this price is paid for admission behind the veil, and men accept the illumination of the Spirit of Truth, then the Secret of the Lord is indeed with them and He shows them his covenant. And oh what wonder of revelation bursts upon the astonished vision of those who after beholding Christ as a wonder-worker, an Example, a Teacher, come at last to know him as a Savior, a Brother, and a Friend ! They who have seen him only as the Ideal Man, know very little of the treasures of truth that are hidden in him. They are like the worshippers of old who paused in the Court of the Gentiles, and were content to gaze through the successive enclosures to the white front of the Sanctuary far within. But as one who should pass into the court of the men, where the worship was heard and engaged in, and from thence enter the Court of the Priests, where the altar of sacrifice and the lava of cleansing spoke of pardon and purification, and still further go with the High Priest into the Holy and Most Holy Place, where the solemnly guarded shrine of the Almighty reserved its splendor—so is it with the progressive experience of the true seeker after salvation. He goes from grace to grace, until he appears in Zion before God. Faith

makes its way from duty to duty, along the line of religious privilege, ever learning and knowing more and more of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and being filled unto all the fullness of God.

And now will any one object to our speaking of the spiritual life as "a Secret of the Lord," something that we cannot describe or explain? Will anyone insist that religion must be something merely visionary and unreal, because it is so far removed from ordinary and practical observation? But what can be told to the uninitiated of the mysteries of art and science? There are privacies of truth into which none can enter who have not passed through the straight gate and narrow way of special preparation. The student who has by self-denying application penetrated the recesses of nature, finds there a beauty, a power, a wisdom unknown to the outer world. Nor can he possibly share with others the enjoyment of that uplifted sphere of thought, imagination and creative work, which is "lit with the light that never was on sea or shore." But it is none the less real and true and good. For there in that ideal world are the fountains whence flow the streams that make all realism fruitful. Even so is it with the spiritual life. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." The Christian sees in Christ what the unbeliever cannot perceive, just as the musician hears in music and the artist finds in art, what is undiscoverable by the ordinary ear or eye. And as the ideal world prescribes its terms of disclosure, which must be complied with by those who would enjoy its contents, and which are readily acceded to by the laborious and devoted students of truth, so does the Gospel insist

on its one and invariable condition, "the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him," and with them alone.

But still further. There is a *Secret within the Secret*. As all believers know of God what the world does not know, so to each believer is imparted a knowledge of Him which is peculiar to himself. Grace is always adjusted to the individuality. The divine life in the soul is shaped by its capacity, and takes form and force according to the personal qualities. Accordingly, as no two natures are exactly alike, so no two Christian experiences are identical. Each perceives the truth through the medium of its own prepossessions of thought, and finds in it what is undiscoverable by any one else. Is not this the meaning of that beautiful image in Revelation, "to him that overcometh will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." It is simply individualized salvation. When a soul is born again of the Holy Spirit, there is whispered to it "a Secret of the Lord" in the peculiar phase of divine life which its personality needs and receives. Every true believer has been gifted with that precious treasure. You know of Christ what I do not; I know of him what you do not. The privacy of our inner life is incommunicable: and so we gratefully wear the white stone, with its new name known to ourselves alone.

Believer, have you realized this wonderful privilege? Do you know what it is to have a life "hid with Christ in God?"—something that you could not describe or explain to anyone else? If not, pray for it—seek it—be not content without it. Beware of a second-hand experience, a religious life patterned after other lives, drawn from the bi-

ographies of saints. Let them alone—except for purposes of instruction perhaps. But never try to reproduce the virtues or achievements of any one else. Be yourself—religiously, as well as intellectually. Of all feeble things, an imitative faith is the poorest. It is at best a copy of a copy—an echo of an echo. There is but one model, and that is Christ. Follow him—reproduce him, and no one else. You will find no strength nor happiness nor success, in trying to be or do what other Christians have been or done. Ask the Lord for that grace which your nature needs, and then prize and develop it as your own—no matter whether it is above or below the gifts of others. Neither judge them by your experience, nor allow them to estimate you by their life. Immeasurable wrong has been done by setting up some one religious system or creed or character, as a standard of judgment by which orthodoxy or heterodoxy is determined. Let us remember that there is a diversity of gifts and of operations in the Kingdom of Heaven. The members of the body are distinct and have different functions. To each is given some one office—no two are alike. “But all these worketh the one and the same spirit, dividing to each one severally as he will.” Of all the treasures of life there is nothing to be compared with an original Christian experience. It is the choicest jewel of the divine regalia—that “white stone” with its unique inscription, graven by the hand of the Father for his beloved child.

It is undoubtedly true that many of us grow tired at times of the mysteries that surround us continually. There are so many secrets challenging and defying our curiosity. We are all the time asking questions that receive no reply, and encountering problems that will not be

solved. Shall we ever get to the end of these glooms and shadows, and emerge into the clear light of a world where all is open and plain and satisfactory? But consider. There *are secrets which cannot be told*, at a certain time and to certain persons. They involve a kind or degree of truth to which the seeker has not yet attained. It is impossible to answer all of the questions of a precocious child—about the wonders of nature and life—because of its limitation of thought. We tell the young inquisitor to wait until he is older and wiser, and he will see these things for himself. Knowledge is determined by capacity. So it is with regard to spiritual truth. It presupposes powers of spiritual discernment and appropriation in us, which may not be in all cases developed. This is undoubtedly true of those grades of truth which involve celestial and eternal realities. They belong to a sphere of being which we have not yet reached, and which is but dimly revealed to us.

“If some strange intelligible thunder
Say to our earth the secret of a star,
Scarce could we catch for terror or for wonder,
Shreds of the story that was pealed so far.”

And if the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the rationale of the Atonement, were fully opened to us, they would doubtless be as inscrutable to us as they are now—simply because of our inability to grasp them. Of such things Jesus spoke when he said “I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” For the solution of many of the problems of grace and providence, as of nature, we must wait in patience and hope for the larger power and brighter light of the eternal world.

Remember also that in some cases *secrets disclose*

themselves by the process of experience. Life is a great interpreter. Today has already thrown much light on the problems of yesterday. You have found many of the sad mysteries of providence explained to you by the evolutions of life, as results and relations and influences gradually appeared—in the formation of character. Well, so it will be with the difficult questions and painful problems of today. Just go on living, faithfully discharging the duty of the hour, and you will find that tomorrow will enlighten many things that are dark to you now. “What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,” is an assurance verified to us continually by the process of experience. The Lord makes use of our own development for the interpretation of many of his inscrutable dealings with us.

Finally, let us hope that the *dispensation of mystery will never cease*. Woe the day when there will be no more questions to ask and problems to solve, and we shall emerge into the unclouded light of complete and final revelation! For then all of the zest of life will disappear. It is mystery which applies to us the strongest impulse and offers to us the brightest reward of existence. Thence come to us curiosity and hope, the motive power of all true progress. Take away from us the explorer's passion, the discoverer's joy, and life would flatten out into the dead level of mere monotony, like a blank plain through which the rigid road runs straight from horizon to horizon, tiring the traveler out ere he begins his journey. But nature is merciful, and helps us on our way by diversified scenery of hills and valleys, shadowy woodland and winding road, that lure us forward with the charm of novelty and surprise.

Even so will it be with our moral career. We cannot believe that the Creator will affront his creatures by endowing them with an insatiable appetite for progress, for which no adequate satisfaction has been provided. That we should spend our lives in this world acquiring the habits and means of investigation, learning how to learn, and then when Time has fully equipped us with the impulses and powers of discovery, Eternity should bring us to a standstill of mental and moral acquisition, nothing more to gain, nothing new to find forever and forever!—better cease to be. But the Father of all will never contradict himself by such a disappointment of his children's education. For there will always be a Secret of the Lord before them and above them, always some mystery not yet solved, always some higher height to scale. This will be the charm of heaven as it is of earth, the prospect of discovery, the allurements of hope. And to that vast and varied voyage of celestial exploration there will be no end. Never will the soul exhaust the wonders of that life in which Gabriel and Michael have been scholars and inquirers from past eternity. Columbus and Copernicus, Newton and Franklin were but children learning the alphabet of that high science which the Christian will practice through the aeons of an endless future, as he tries to comprehend with all saints the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and to be filled unto all the fullness of God. This is the hope, full of immortality, which takes from death its sting and from the grave its victory:

“O strange discovery! land that knows no bounding!
Isles far off hailed, bright seas without a breath,
What time the white sail of the soul is rounding
The misty cape, the promontory Death!”

XII. EARTH A SCHOOL FOR HEAVEN.

"I go to prepare a place for you."—JOHN 14:2.

Among the most touching scenes in my memory, is the picture of a mother seeing her children go away from her to the distant school. I shall never forget her as she stood in the doorway of the old home, and watched them as long as she could see them go up the street, until they turned out of her sight. It was her invariable custom. Three sons, one after the other, left her side and hurried off to college and the great world. They went away with all the careless courage of youth, forgetful of the past, eager for the future, thinking only of what lay before them, and but little of her who stood gazing after them with eyes of love, and a heart of prayer in their behalf.

How many a parent has felt the pain of such a parting! When the young birds fly away from the nest that has reared them, to depend on it no more, the mother, the father, remain in the forsaken home, sitting in the strange quietude of the places once so full and noisy, with only memory and hope for companionship. But so it has been, is and ever will be. The past gives place to the future, the old are displaced by the young, and life wanes that it may wax somewhere else.

*"The rose of sunset folds its glory up
To burst again from out the heart of dawn."*

And the children whose gain is the parents' loss, find in their turn the cost of parentage, with its joys and its sorrows, its increase and its withering away. This is the compensation that keeps the balance of life even. We pay our debts to the past by contributing to the future. The parent sends his children forth, remembering how he left his own early home; and it helps him to bear the pang of bereavement that he recalls, perhaps for the first time, the grief on his mother's face when she bade him farewell, and he went away so eagerly.

Now if we have learned to look at home life in its relations to the past and the future, and find in it not a finality but a connecting link between the tenderness of domestic ties and the responsibilities of independent existence, why not regard this world and our life in it in a similar way?

A youth dies suddenly. He was equipped with the powers and promise of a noble future. He had enjoyed the choicest fruits of varied culture. He had been surrounded by the love and help of those who looked to him for great service to the world, and it was believed that he would furnish a new and valuable link in the great chain of divine utility. And yet just when he is prized the most and needed, the mysterious summons comes, and he is gone. What shall we say? Shall we speak of this death as a loss—a calamity? and wonder why all that preparation should be wasted, and no harvest result from such costly sowing except the bitter fruit of disappointment? But that would be like a parent deplored the spoliation of his once full and happy home, through the departure of those on whom he had lavished his best devotion. They are gone—they are lost! and nothing remains for father and

mother but to sit and brood over their loneliness in the silence and the emptiness. Such parents would be reminded by us that what seems to them an end is really a beginning. Their loss is the world's gain. Their children have gone from them into a larger home, where they will honor their parents and return to them a reward much greater than would have been possible under the old roof tree.

This is a suggestion of the Christian view of death—of those untimely deaths, as they are called, which seem to earthly eyes like the nipping of buds in the spring by the frost. Divine revelation lifts the curtain from a world to which this life is but the anteroom. There we see the same God presiding who is here known as a Heavenly Father. There the Savior gathers to himself the saved, and glorifies them with his grace. There we behold the activity of earnest love, the high employ of great and useful enterprise. There all is pure and true and strong in the development of thought and the highest use of created faculty. Such is the world to which our mortal sphere is the preparatory school room. Who then shall say that a life has been arrested in its growth, which has been called to go up higher? Why should we regard it as a loss, a calamity, when the soul is removed from the primary department and promoted to a place in the higher grades of divine culture? The mistake lies in our point of view. We are thinking only of our own present interests and the relationships of earth. And indeed these are our necessary concern; nor should anyone be blamed for the natural pain of the broken heart, the dismembered life. If Jesus wept at the grave, we cannot wonder at any mourner's tears.

But God has other things to care for than this little world of ours. He must provide for the upper rooms, the higher stories of that "Father's house" where Jesus has gone to "prepare a place" for us. May it not be then that he has need for the young and promising there as well as here? and may not the education which we regard as necessary to a perfect career on this earth, be still more useful as a preparation for a heavenly career? When the Master told his disciples that there were "many rooms" or dwelling places in his Father's house, he indicated a close connection as existing between this life and the life to come. When he assured them that they were to share his glory, he revealed a heavenly state in vital sympathy with earthly conditions. For where and in what mode of existence is the ascended and glorified Christ? He is not in some remote mystery of divine beatitude, far removed from mortal contact amid the supernal secrets of eternity. The scriptures reveal the Son of God as now seated on the throne of "all authority in heaven and on earth." He must reign until all enemies are put under his feet. He walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks and holds the seven stars in his right hand—and these are the emblems of the churches. So near is he still to the world that he died to save. And is it not written that "where I am, ye may be also?"—showing that the saints will share the Savior's relationships. They shall see him as he is, they will behold his glory and be forever with the Lord. "His servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads."

We see then that there may be a special reason for the unexpected removal of some servant from the lower to the higher sphere. If he bade fair to be useful here,

might he not be still more useful there? Undoubtedly the needs of the heavenly world are far greater than those obtaining in this. The field is wider, the range more diversified, the interests involved more serious—as the spiritual and the eternal transcend the material and the temporal. It is plain therefore why the aged and the disabled are not the only ones who die. For them death might mean rest and reward. We sometimes feel even grateful for their deliverance from the burdens and the pains of earth. But from the heavenly point of view the death of the young or of the well-endowed might be far more appropriate. The Lord has need of the fresh heart and the buoyant zeal of the beginner in those enterprises on high, which wait for the infusions of new life. He has a place for the worker in his prime, ripe with earthly experience, and strong with the gathered wisdom and power of time, to reinforce the celestials with his peculiar contributions.

Thus the higher worlds are being enriched continually from this lower sphere; and these supplies are of great value. For there is a kind of spiritual ability which is acquired nowhere else than on this battlefield of earth, where truth and error, right and wrong are in perpetual collision. Even the Son of God must become incarnate, live an earthly life and be made perfect through sufferings, ere he could attain to the eminence of a Redeemer. For the same reason there is a department of his government which no angel or archangel can fill. It is reserved for those who have been trained in the severe school of human experience, where contact with sin has taught them the special value of holiness.

In the great economies of grace, there is work which

none but redeemed souls can perform. In that high employ John and Paul have been engaged, Wiclit and Luther have been busy, Judson and Spurgeon have been at work ever since the church on earth deplored their departure. But the "General assembly and church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven" has been the richer for their arrival; and doubtless God's operations in this world have been accelerated by those additions to the ranks of spiritual energy. If we could see the saints in glory now, we should find them more effectively engaged in the service of Christ than they had ever been before. It needs but little reflection to see how well adapted to the furtherance of Christ's kingdom on earth, is the knowledge and power gained by a life spent in his service here, and which may be continued after death on the higher plane of spiritual existence. With all this in mind, shall we ever again think of a life as *wasted* which has been taken from our side prematurely, as we say? or shall we wonder why so much preparation was permitted to be made for a career which seemed to fill so brief a space?

You see one gathering blooms in the garden, and plucking buds and partly opened flowers. Why not spare the blossoms, and take only the full-blown beauty? Because the floral tribute needs them both to be complete. The buds will enhance the glory of the flower with their infantile grace; and also they will open and bloom for the decoration of home. So when we remark the mortality of babes which is such a painful feature of human statistics, let us not complain over this too early harvesting of the fields of life. If it is true that the majority of the race have died in infancy, we should remember that all this has been to the gain of heaven rather than of the

world of woe, since the purifying influence of the atonement is extended at once to those who enter eternity at the tender age. By this means everlasting life is being recruited continually with the freshest and finest offerings of earth.

Surely it ought to help us bear the bereavements of the heart and of the home, to think of the joy of the celestials as they welcome these new and choice additions to the heavenly fold. The angelic existence is not propagated like our own. There is no marriage, no fatherhood or motherhood, no infancy there. How then must they cherish that wonderful thing which grows only on earth—the bud of being that we call a babe! Let no mother fear for the welfare of the darling she has lost. It is being loved and cared for by holy ones who will give it a better education than she could. It will be reared by them in conditions of life far superior to any found in this dark and dangerous world. There it will expand and grow in the divine service beyond our power to imagine. And then it will be restored to her as part of the glory of her reward, when she enters through grace into the same blessed abode.

It was necessary for the Savior to "go to prepare a place" for his disciples in the celestial world, because the heaven of the holy had furnished no conditions suitable to the abode of saved sinners. No provision had been made in the angelic realms for salvation. When Lucifer and his associates lost their celestial estate, they were at once excluded from the divine fellowship; no cross, no sacrifice, no mercy seat for them. Perhaps this was for the reason that they had sinned against the perfect light, and thus shown themselves to be incapable of restoration. But when

God's creatures lost their innocence in Eden, His love was continued to them, perhaps because of their ignorance of the real nature of their offense, and He planned and provided for them a rescue from evil.

This redemption however involved a change in heaven as well as on earth, and therefore we read in Revelation of the "Throne of God and of the Lamb." In the midst of the throne stands a "lamb as it had been slain," symbol of the atonement as the medium of the divine government. Toward the heirs of salvation God will ever be related through Christ, their Father in him: and they will be forever in Christ as the children of the Most High. It was in this way that the Redeemer prepared a place for his own. As the High Priest of their profession it was necessary for him to go with the sacrifice for sin into the holy place, and present it before the Mercy Seat in their behalf. Still more, he must remain there as their representative and intercessor. This he has done and is doing continually, and by this means a place is prepared and kept in readiness for those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple.

It is in this light that we should think of the Christian's heaven. It differs in many respects from the angel's heaven. The un fallen sons of God need no Savior, nor have they ever sung the new song of Moses and the Lamb. For them there will be direct and personal society with Absolute Holiness. But for us and such as we, the "lamb in the midst of the throne" must be our medium of intercourse with the Almighty through all eternity. We shall stand forever in his righteousness, and with his

name on our foreheads. And when we think of the tremendous cost to him of this exaltation for us, through what exertions and agonies of sacrificial life and death it was necessary for him to "go to prepare a place" for our use, we feel that the burden of our song through all eternity must be "unto him that loveth us and washed us from our sins in his blood: and he made us to be a kingdom and priests unto his God and Father: to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever, Amen!"

But still further. The place prepared for his own by the Savior, will be one not only of general suitability but of particular adaptation. As the endless diversities of human character find for themselves congenial conditions on earth, so that each individuality is able to live its own life, there will be in heaven a similar correspondence between endowment and environment. It is contrary to all experience that there should be no varieties of power and privilege in heaven, but that saved souls should be merged in one uniform state of happiness and holiness. They are not so in this world. Here we find all kinds of christians in the one church—the well endowed and the poorly equipped, the flourishing and the feeble, the apt scholars and the slow learners, the faithful workers and the inefficient servants. Will not these diversities of gifts reappear in the fortunes of eternity? It is unreasonable to suppose that Paul entered the heavenly state just as Mark did, or that John would stand there on the same level as Demas (if he was saved at last.) We feel certain that the essential quality of such a soul as Judson or Gordon would locate him in a high place in heaven, as it ensured him an elevated position on earth. Character determines the spiritual rank, power and enjoyment of believers on earth;

why not on high? That this is the truth with regard to the heavenly state, is plainly taught in the parable of the talents. He that is faithful over many things will receive a proportionate reward.

There will be grades and degrees of glory corresponding to the capacity and worth of the glorified. For each personality a place will be prepared exactly adapted to its needs. The heaven of James would not be identical with that of Peter, nor could David share the celestial experiences of Moses. There will be a diversity of operations by one and the self-same spirit through all eternity, dividing to each soul severally as he will. But the law of life remains ever the same—character is place. Moral capacity determines moral state. Forever and forever we shall be where we are, because of what we are.

This view of eternity throws a very solemn light upon the things of time. If it is true that we shall enter heaven on the same spiritual plane on which we leave this world, it follows that we are now fashioning for ourselves our eternity. Not only will eternal life or death be our portion, according as we accept or reject the Gospel now, but eternal life will be shaped and colored by the kind of religion which we are practicing now. Is not that worth thinking about occasionally? There are men and women all around us who bitterly regret their neglect of educational advantages in youth. Now that they see how their entire life has been lowered and darkened by the losses thus occasioned, they would be willing to go back and live their childhood over again, if only to lay a better foundation on which to build afterward. But it is too late. Nature will not provide a second springtime for those who

misuse the first, nor will Life give us more than one childhood in which to determine the trend of our career.

Even so it may be that there are saints in glory who would be willing to leave heaven and pass through another existence in this world, with all of its perils and pains. For now that they see how their capacity to do and enjoy, their relations to God and his society, are wholly regulated by the moral character which their earthly experience created, they keenly feel the need of more than they possess of spiritual endowment. But it is too late. As they left time they entered eternity, and as they entered the heavenly state, on that plane of relative being must they continue forever. Certainly there will be progress in heaven for all, but with some it will be more rapid and of higher grade than with others. He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly ; he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully.

We are still in the spring of the immortal year. We are yet in the youth of the everlasting life. Shall we not be more heedful of our sowing and of our schooling ? If it is true that the Redeemer has gone to prepare a place for us on high, it is equally true that he has left the Spirit to prepare us for that place. The latter work is as necessary as the former. Of what use an eminent and honored position for those who are not capable of filling it ? It should be the first and constant aim of life to profit by that education which the Holy Spirit will impart. It is more important than we now realize, to develop godliness in the nature and the life. If we could hear the voices from the higher world, our ears would be filled every day with warnings and appeals to live soberly, righteously and

godly in this present world. It is by such means that we are fashioning our eternity.

“For this cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge temperance; and in your temperance patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness love; for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

XIII. SOLITUDE.

"The hour cometh, yea, is now come, when ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone for the Father is with me."—JNO. 16:32.

THERE are different kinds of solitude. There is that of the Desert—the blank waste of earth and sky where only the wind seems alive. There is that of the Ocean, whose vacant expanse is like an alien world, “so lonely ‘twas that even God scarce seemed there to be.” There is the solitude of the Forest, in whose sombre secrecy night finds a lair, and silence a home. There is the solitude of the Mountain—a crystal sphere lifted above the earth, and reserved for the clouds and storm and sky. There is the solitude of Ruins, more still and suggestive than any other, where the Past sits brooding with hushed lips in solemn endless revery. Thus nature relieves her varied pattern of life with blanks and shadows, not useless to the general effect.

We find human experience corresponding to this mingled regimen of sound and silence, action and repose. There is always a tendency in life toward separateness and seclusion, more marked in some than in others. Individuality is sometimes of a morbid mood, like the shy genius of Hawthorne, or the brooding melancholy of Cowper sighing for a lodge in some vast wilderness. Sorrow often

drives the soul into the desert, there to find the sympathy of silence :

“There is no solitude on earth so deep,
As that where man decrees that man shall weep.”

It is Jeremiah mourning amid the ruins of Jerusalem, or Cicero shutting himself into his sylvan retreat to lament the death of his daughter, or Tacitus devoting himself to his stern history to escape the sterner trials of his time. What loneliness more pathetic than this !

Love and joy have their retirements also. The spirit may need to be alone to count and prize its treasures. Religion has always encouraged this tendency, to an extent. The highest efforts of faith, hope and love, require isolation. Prayer is, at its best, a solitary exercise. To enter the Secret Place of the Most High, the soul must go alone. So it is with the noblest work of any kind. The curtained alcove of the student, the bolted door of the experimenter, the abstraction of the thinker, the remoteness of reverie, are conditions of discovery. Newton, absent-minded in his speculations ; Vico, the founder of the science of history, lost to the world amid the mystery of his ideas ; Angelo, a hermit in Rome ; Ericsson, a recluse in New York, are specimens of the price which creative thought exacts for its productions.

Genius is sometimes another name for solitariness. The rarely gifted are by their own endowments drawn away from their kind and above them. Milton, whose soul was like a star and dwelt apart ; Dante, with his unshareable experiences of woe ; Pascal, whose refined knowledge was like a disease of exclusiveness ; Beethoven, isolated by deafness and misfortune ; Shelly, whose muse

loved all waste and solitary places ; Coleridge, the mystic, unknown to his neighbors ; Wordsworth, who had the inward eye which is the bliss of solitude, these dwellers in the wilderness were forced thither by their own peculiarities.

Or it may be that the very greatness of a man's mission isolates him, like Columbus, Copernicus, Harvey or Jenner, too far ahead of their age to have companions. Others have been outlawed by cruelty, driven from home to perish among strangers—like Demosthenes brooding sadly on the cliff that looked toward Athens, Hannibal, outcast among enemies, Napoleon chained to the rock mid the billows, far from France. History has few sadder pictures to show than these. It is true that some states of exile are self-procured. There are misanthropic lives that withdraw themselves from the world through spite or fear, cynics who despise, or pessimists who despair of men. Of such was Schopenhauer, whose dreary creed denied all hope to himself and others ; or Zimmerman, Chatterton, Hume and Gray, whom misfortune or false philosophy drove into the gloom ; or Chopin whom a hectic passion for music made too sensitive for social contact ; or De-Quincy whose narcotized imagination preferred the loneliness of dreams ; or Thoreau the egotistical hermit of Walden, or Byron whose moody spirit took delight in stalking apart in pretentious misery, “ lord of himself, that heritage of woe.”

There are dangers in solitude, perils of selfishness and abnormal conditions of introspective insistence, or despondent stagnation. Indeed as an end in itself, something to be sought as a chief good, it is one of the mirages of the soul, luring men only to deceive and disappoint them.

The educated mind may find a profit occasionally, or

“A pleasure in the pathless woods,
A rapture on the lonely shore,
A society where none intrudes;”

but the prisoner or exile condemned to monotonous isolation, exclaims against the dreadful fate, and denies the charms which sages have seen in the face of solitude. Not only have monks and ascetic recluses of all kinds reaped this harvest of weariness, but Petrarch fleeing from the world to beautiful Vaucluse, found amid the stillness of self-culture only the pains of ennui.

As a means to an end, however, it cannot be denied that Solitude has always been an element of the best education. True greatness has been reared in quiet places. There Moses must spend forty years of desert seclusion, and Elijah be driven to Horeb for his commission, and John Baptist be educated in the wilderness, and Saul of Tarsus spend three years in Arabia ere his public work could begin. And even the Son of God resorted again and again to the silence and separateness which prefaced his ministry in Nazareth and the wilderness.

“Alone; and yet I am not alone,” was our Savior’s paradoxical description of his lot. He was apparently the most isolated of men. Between him and all other human beings there opened the deep gulf which separates holiness from sinfulness, yea the infinite from the finite. Coming fresh as he did from the beatific society of the celestials, what fellowship could he find with the degraded inmates of earth? We can imagine no loneliness more extreme than that of a refined and noble man in the midst of filthy barbarians or imbruted criminals. Or suppose a thoughtful, educated person, accustomed to the high intercourse of literature

and art, compelled to associate with ignorant stupid minds. Or imagine a devout worshipper of the true God, living in the midst of foul idolatries. What dungeon confinement, what lost isle of the sea could equal the dreariness of such a plight? Yet the solitariness of Jesus was even more intense. He stood alone even in his own family, where his brethren did not believe in him. He must remind his mother, "What have I to do with thee?" After years of intimacy with his disciples, he found them still far from his real companionship—"have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me?" More than this, he was to feel the cruel loneliness of abandonment; "the hour cometh and now is, when ye shall be scattered every one to his own, and shall leave me alone."

If this were true of his relations to his friends, what must have been the interval between his soul and the multitudes who reviled and rejected him? His was the awful excommunication of the crowd, the blank ostracism which makes even of populous streets a desert. Thus Jesus moved among men, unrecognized, unhelped; appealing in vain to their friendship, giving his best to those who knew it not, lavishing his love on those who rejected it, pouring out his wisdom before the blind and the deaf, and dying at last to save those who would not even believe that they needed or that he could bestow salvation.

There is no more painful isolation of the soul than this. It drives the nature back upon itself in a death-like recoil, to give all and receive nothing. Men have grown dull and despairing toward their kind, women have turned hard and bitter toward their families, patriots have lost faith in their country and philanthropists have abandoned their cause, on account of such desertion. But not so

with Jesus. He went on teaching and loving and giving, even to the ungrateful and the evil. A wicked and perverse generation might refuse his gifts, but could not discourage his beneficence. His disciples continued obtuse and unsympathetic, but he never lost patience and pity for them. Even on the cross he prayed for his enemies, and he came back from the other world to reestablish Peter in his love, and the disciples who forsook him, in their faith.

Whence this cheerful devotion which nothing could extinguish? this indomitable confidence in man that would not be defeated? What was it that preserved the Redeemer from the misanthropy which has so often darkened the defeated reformers of the world? He tells the secret in the words, "I am not alone, for the Father is with me." It was that divine companionship which compensated for his human isolation. Friendless and forlorn on the earthly side of his experience, he was "not alone" on the heavenly. There was response and sympathy and fellowship. This explains his frequent retirement for prayer, his going apart into a solitary place to pray, up into the mountain, continuing all night in prayer. There he found celestial society. Angels ministered to him. Once on the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elias appeared with him in glory and spake of his impending death.

"Not alone." However blank and cheerless the earth-side of his life, with its exclusions and desertions, there was another range of experience all bright and warm with blessed association. No wonder then that he could walk calm and cheerful on his lonely way. He saw what men could not see. He heard what they could not hear. The Father was with him, and all heaven surrounded him with its company.

"Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ." It is sometimes the Christian's lot to be removed from sympathetic contact with others by the terms of his duty and calling. The pioneer is often alone because ahead of his day. The benefactor may be alone because above his age. The true conservative will be alone because behind his fellows. It is perhaps the mission of truth to antagonize public opinion and place its servants in a small minority. Individuality often insists on setting its possessor apart from all others, by making him peculiar in his ways and uncompanionable in his moods. Originality isolates. Leaders live lonely lives because no one can enter into their projects. The radical is misunderstood. To champion a new cause and renounce old things is sure to make of one an outlaw. Ah! who can count the cost to the brave pioneers, of their single-handed persistence—alone against the world, with no ally to support them! Whence their courage? what sustains them in their patient faith and hope?

It is the Savior's secret, "I am not alone, for the Father is with me." They have a life hid with Christ in God. They walk by faith in things invisible. They are attended by celestial companionship. The motives of action and its aims, are for them found in the higher world. And therefore they endure as seeing him who is invisible. What wonder then that Judson could labor seven years before his first convert was gained, or that Howard could plead so patiently for the prisoner, and Gough stand alone so long in his opposition to the liquor traffic! Such men can dispense with the world's help, for they depend on heavenly assistance. They are not alone even when most isolated.

"The Father is with me." What an honor! What a privilege and joy! to be a worker together with God! If such an alliance is possible and heaven's best society is open to us, ought we not to hasten to accept it? But stay a moment. Do you clearly see what this means?

Alone with God!

Are you prepared for that? do you know what it involves? I fear that some of us would shrink from such an association if we saw it as it really is.

There are many people who do not know what it is to be *alone with themselves*. They have never shut their nature in to a faithful self-examination, by which candidly to search the seccrecies of the soul. Did you ever make the attempt? It may be difficult, even distasteful. To go beneath the surface of show and action, to examine the principles of thought and feeling, to ransack the contents of memory and exhume the long buried past, and to do this by the light of moral truth and judgment—you will find such a process a laborious and costly one. It will tax the self-esteem, and perhaps startle and alarm one's self-consciousness, to look at the underside of life and see what strange things have been fostered there, at the roots and in the depths of being. For this reason true self-knowledge is rare. Many persons do not *dare* to be alone with themselves. They prefer an outside life of excitement and distraction; they may even resort to dissipation, anything to get away from those hauntings of memory, those wraiths of self-consciousness that rise like phantoms from the remains of the unburied past. And well may they shrink from those beginnings of hell which an unforgiven unpurified nature contains!

Solitude is a test of character. He need fear little else who is not afraid of being alone with memory, and looking with the clear eye of retrospect on the irreversible things that have been. Happy the life that can endure that ordeal, and turn from cheerful yesterdays to confident tomorrows! To be alone with the conscience is as a rehearsal of the Judgment Day, for its deliverances are but the fore-sent voice of God. If then solitude is so searching in its human aspects and earthly significance, what must it be to be *alone with God*?—to stand in the presence of that all seeing and all searching Eye from which nothing can be hid, and be judged by the absolute Holiness which nothing can deceive! The surest memory, the severest conscience are but indications of what He is and can be who knows us altogether, and judges past and present infallibly.

“Who then shall ascend into the hill of the Lord and who shall stand in His holy place?—he that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity or sworn deceitfully; he shall receive the blessing of the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”

This ideal was realized by Jesus of Nazareth, and it explains his fellowship with the Most High. “I and the Father are one.” There was no remove or barrier of unlikeness or enmity between his soul and the heavenly life, and therefore the Father loved the Son and committed all thing into his hands. These terms of companionship must be complied with by all who would not fear to meet God face to face; and they can be accepted only through the pardon and purification which it was the Savior’s mission to bestow. “I am the Way, the Truth, the Life

said Jesus; no man cometh to the Father but by me." But when, through repentance and faith, the nature is identified with Christ, all of his privileges are transferred to it. "Father, I will that those whom thus hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory" was the prayer of our High Priest for his own. And whoever bears the name of the well-beloved, is entitled to the very nearness and dearness of the Son to the Father. "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Therefore the Christian is not afraid to be alone with Memory, for the past is washed clean of all stain in the atoning blood of the cross. He is not afraid to be alone with Conscience, for it also has been "purged from dead works to serve the living God." He is not afraid to be alone with evil of any kind, for "who is he that can harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?" He is not afraid to be alone with Death for "neither life nor death, nor things present nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." He is not afraid to be alone with God, for "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, all things are new, and all things are of God."

This divine companionship should be cultivated and enjoyed more than it is. Our busy age of distraction and absorption in wordly matters, is unfriendly to those quiet habits of spiritual seclusion which were once so common among the saints. We can find but little time for private meditation, even for protracted prayer and study of the scriptures. The stream of life runs broad and swift, but it has not the depth and force which a stiller current enjoys. And for the same reason little do we grasp of the

treasures of grace. They are reserved for those only who like Enoch "walk with God;"—like the Psalmist resort to the "Secret place of the Most High;"—like the Apostle, have a life "hid with Christ in God." To them is given a joy of companionship which will turn any solitary place into a festal retreat. Music attends them in the silence, and light shines on them in the gloom. Divine Revelation reserves its choicest gifts for such intimacies where "none but God is near." It is in that sweet loneliness that inspiration is born, and from its sacred privacy the apostle comes forth with his "word of the Lord" for men. They who refuse the urgencies by which the Spirit drives the son of man into the wilderness, little know what they lose. Some message from heaven was waiting for them there, which only the lips of silence could speak. How profitable has the believer found certain periods of sickness or enforced retirement, when the soul had nothing to do but to wait upon God! Who can tell the precious meanings of those sacred seclusions when "I am not alone for the Father is with me," was all that human speech could describe of the ineffable joy of celestial communion!

Of such experiences was born the poet's prayer and song :—

" Still still with thee—when purple morning breaketh,
When the bird riseth and the shadows flee ;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than the daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness—I am with thee.

" Alone with thee, amid the mystic shadows,
The solemn hush of nature newly born ;
Alone with thee, in breathless adoration
In the calm dew and freshness of the morn.

" So shall it be in that bright morning
When the soul waketh and life's shadows flee ;
O in that hour, fairer than daylight dawning,
Shall rise the glorious thought—I am with thee."

XIV. NO CHANGE, NO GOD.

"Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God."—Ps. 55:19.

ON a certain Fourth of July evening, great numbers of people were grouped in a public place, observing a display of fireworks. As the sudden bursts of flame shot forth in the darkness and filled the gloomy air with brilliant effects of many-colored light, the multitude were loud in their expressions of enjoyment. The radiant whirls, the sparkling fountains, the soaring columns of fire with their falling shower of rainbow tints, were applauded heartily. But when the pyrotechnic exhibition was over, and the solemn reign of night was resumed, how many persons in that concourse gave a look upward to the other display which was shining from the dome of space? Yet there was a spectacle which for beauty and grandeur exceeded all the fireworks of earth, as the conflagration of a city would outshine a camp-fire. If men had never beheld it before, the revelation of the starry heavens would strike them dumb with amazement, as those scintillating myriads, those gleaming constellations, those misty fields of light broke on their view. And, as interpreted by science, the wonders of sun and system, galaxy and nebula, beyond conception vast and numerous, would be as an almost incredible fairy tale, a romance of the astral universe, too marvellous to be true.

Yet knowing all this, what is the usual attitude of our minds toward the nocturnal sphere? Apart from the occasional excitement caused by an eclipse or a meteor, the majority of people pay no attention at all to the sidereal phenomena. It was pathetic to note the blank silence and loneliness which befell after the noisy, flashing fireworks had disappeared, and the crowd had gone to their homes, without a thought of the still and starry splendors that were shining down on them as they had done upon Abram's faith and David's wonder. There they are tonight—shining on, shining ever—undimmed above our darkness, untroubled by our storms, as they will continue to glow when the earth itself is wrapped in its final fires. And yet a boy's Roman candle or sky rocket will arouse more popular interest than all the starry heavens of space.

Of course we must make allowance for familiarity. If fireworks were let off every night, we should think no more of them than we now do of Jupiter and the Milky Way. And if the stars were visible only once a year the exhibition would attract many spectators. It is too much to ask that we give the same attention to the regular as to the irregular—to the constant as to the occasional.

But is this true? Are we absolved from attention to the uniform because of its uniformity, and are we justified in bestowing our admiration only on the exceptions to the rule? Children, ignorant and thoughtless persons, may follow that drift of mental carelessness; but is it not something to be avoided by all responsible minds? For that inclination, if indulged, soon leads to grave religious errors. There are multitudes of human beings who never recognize the supernatural because of the stability of the natural. They cannot see the Creator through the perpetual presence of the

creation. This they admit. They will tell you that if they could witness such signs and wonders as the Bible describes, they too might believe in a God or a Savior. But as it is, there seems to be no break in the current of cause and effect. Nature and man are the two invariable factors of time; and as the Reign of Law appears to be invariable, what room can be left for anything else? "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God."

But we contend that just because there are no changes (in the sense of deviations from the order of nature), men should fear God: for this sustained regularity is the highest proof of His existence. If there is no Supreme Intelligence and Will presiding over all things, how can the stable uniformity of nature be accounted for? The smooth and faultless regularity of a vast and complex machine is never taken as an evidence of self-sufficiency on its part. Would any sane mind wait for a break or a deflection in the mechanism, in order to be assured of an inventor or a constructor? Of course not. Perfect order never comes of itself. Neither nature nor life teach us to look for the self-derived and self-sustained in anything; but the more complete and perfect an organization, the more need is there for an adequate cause to account for it. And yet when we reach the Cosmos, that all-inclusive and all-perfect system, men stop short in their logic, and because of the faultlessness of the creation, refuse to believe in a Creator.

From the days of the Psalmist "night unto night showeth knowledge" of Him whose glory the heavens declare, and we have been wont to say that "an undevout astronomer is mad." But that kind of insanity is only too common in these days of scientific culture. "The heavens declare no longer the glory of God, but that of New-

ton and Kepler," said Semerie. La Place affirmed "In my heaven I find no God;" and Lalande, "I have peered through the heavens for sixty years and have never seen him yet." And why? "because there is no change" there, but all is continuous and complete, as the movements of an automatic machine. But what automaton was ever self-made or self-sustained? Here is the testimony of science itself as an answer to this question. We know that the stability of the solar system, in the mathematic precision of all its parts and properties, depends on the nice adjustment of very delicate conditions: e. g., if the orbits of the planets were not all nearly in the same plane, their entire harmony would be endangered. Also, if the planets did not all move in the same direction from West to East (a rule to which there is only one apparent exception in the satellite of Jupiter) the whole system would be liable to interruption. Yet it has been demonstrated that "the probability that this motion is the result of intelligent causation rather than chance, is two millions of times greater than that the sun will rise on the morrow of a given day." Are we wrong then in maintaining that because there are no changes in the heavens, therefore we should fear God as the necessary Preserver of that changelessness? Would it be a greater evidence that an Infinite Creator and Ruler exists, that on some night the moon should forget to shine when due, or the stars wander away from their familiar constellations? Yet men gaze and wonder at a shower of meteors, who never give a thought to the punctual orbs that wheel so grandly along the arches of divine geometry, "forever singing as they shine, the hand that made us is divine." Is this reasonable?

If so, we may ascribe to Disorder an authority which

Order does not possess, and yield an honor to Confusion which all ordinary experience refuses to it. Such a principle would derange any department of life in which it was introduced; and if we can reason at all from the finite to the infinite, we must exclude it from our ideas of God and His working.

“ What prodigies can Power Divine perform
More grand than it produces year by year,
And all in sight of inattentive man ?—
Familiar with the effect we slight the Cause,
And in the constancy of nature's course,
And regular return of genial months,
And renovation of the faded world,
See naught to wonder at.

“ Should God again, as once in Gideon,
Interrupt the undeviating and punctual sun,
How would the world admire !
But speaks it less an Agency Divine
To make him know his moment,
When to set, and when to rise, age after age,
Than to arrest his course ?

“ All we behold is miracle ; but seen so duly,
All is miracle in vain.”

We may notice another form which the skepticism based on uniformity sometimes assumes. Some persons find it difficult to believe in a special Divine Providence, for the reason that they see no supernatural interferences in their life. It is all cause and effect with them. We sow and we reap according to natural laws, and every man is the architect of his own fortune. They tell us that no angels come from heaven to earth now as to Abraham and Peter—no voice sounds from the sky as to Jesus, no vision is granted as to Paul. There is nothing but the calm and unbroken sequence of nature and human nature, which admits of no deviation from its established order.

In other words, "because they have no changes" (which cannot be accounted for on natural principles) "therefore they fear not God" (as a factor in the problem of life.)

But may He not rule us, as He rules nature, through and by that very order which seems to be so self-sufficient? Indeed it may be said that if God cannot regulate human affairs without interfering with human freedom, He is not all-perfect. He cannot do what you are doing all the time for your children, whom you manage to guide very often by indirect measures which they do not recognize. The best part of parental authority is that which consists in unseen, unfelt exertions of influence, such as setting examples, opening opportunities, suggesting measures, and so working on and through their free will that children may be most fully under their parents' power, when they are least conscious of it. Our children have no idea of the real character and cost of their subsistence. They take everything that is given to them, they come and go, and use all the means of home and school, as though such things were a part of the order of nature. But we know otherwise. We know that there is around them all the time a Human Providence of care and effort and painful cost. Well then, is it inconceivable that there may be something corresponding to this around our larger life, with its deeper capacities and more complex needs? Is it an evidence that no Divine Providence exists, that we do not see the heavenly hand or hear the celestial voice? Rather it may be a repetition of childhood's thoughtlessness, to ascribe all the wondrous provisions of mature life to the "order of nature." But whence that order? If a child needs a supervising Intelligence, does not a man need one much more? You say

that you pay for the food that you eat for the nourishment of your body, and labor for the knowledge with which your mind grows and works. But who has furnished the physical system and the intellectual powers which you employ so freely? We make for ourselves a place in society, and construct for time and eternity some building of renown. But no man that ever lived has had anything to do with originating or sustaining the laws and forces of the social and intellectual world.

The truth is that as soon as we look below the surface of our self-conscious existence, we find at once its imperious limitations. Man is not the architect of his own fortune. He is its builder, and has much to do with planning and perfecting it. But before and above and around his active agency, there is and always has been the greater government of Infinite wisdom and power. This we come to see at last, if we are wise. Just as the child grown to manhood has his eyes opened (perhaps through his own experience of parentage) to the fact that all his early years were really lived in the arms of a parental providence, so may we recognize that in our manly or womanly life, we "live, move, and have our being in Him" who is the all embracing and pervading spirit of whatever is true beautiful and good.

How unreasonable then is the plea that because they have no changes which cannot be traced to their own causation, therefore men will fear not God as their Father and Friend. What would they have? Would they be convinced of a divine government over them, if they found their own wills paralyzed at times, their own freedom taken away? If we were not consciously our own keepers, with life dependent on our own exertions, so that we could

reasonably argue from the past to the future, but were all the time uncertain whether a Higher Power might interpose to help or hinder us, should we be any more inclined to believe in the reality and nearness of the Most High? I would not. Such a state of things would be so annoying and bewildering, that it would suggest the presidency of some malign Fate, or anarchic Misrule in the universe. But, as matters are, the regular routine of cause and effect by which human thought and will are attached to a system that can be used with confidence, is itself an evidence that man and nature are both within the orbit of a higher law.

Why then wait for the exception to prove the rule? —as men do who in adversity begin to think seriously of duty, and remember their obligations to one who is above themselves! When disease and death interrupt the natural flow of events, they grow solemn as in the presence of eternal destiny and divine relationship. But why should not life and health have the same effect on us? Is the smiling calm of a summer day a less wonderful thing than the dark trouble of the storm? ought we to wait for the plunging cataract to reveal to us the current of the stream? The wise man is he who sees God in peace and prosperity, attributes to him the rewards of joy and triumph, and is grateful for the good which he has himself acquired. "Both riches and honor come of him and he reigneth over all." "All my springs are in thee;"—"Thou openest thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."

It may be remarked in this connection that undue importance is sometimes attached to the signs and wonders performed by Jesus of Nazareth, as though they formed his

only or chief claim to the faith and service of men. But the miracles wrought by him were only one part, and not the greatest part, of the evidences of his divinity. His life of purity and benignity, his character and conduct so wise true and good, were the highest credentials that he presented to the world. That a human nature should be exhibited, which could flow along the lines of ordinary and humble life without a stain, and a life be lived in all manner of exposures and exertions without a moral blemish—this smooth continuity of perfectness, is far more impressive to the thoughtful observer than any of the occasional flashes of wonder that startled the ordinary spectator. An immaculate human nature was really a greater prodigy than any supernatural feature of his life. The crowning miracle of Christ was Himself—not what he did, but what he was. The healing of the sick and stilling the sea and raising the dead, were but the occasional and exceptional expressions of a power which found its best expressions in the calm consistency of everyday oneness with God.

“ His miracles were no state splendors
Whose pomp his daily works excel;
The rock which breaks the stream, but renders
Its constant current audible.

“ The power which startles us in thunders
Works ever noiselessly in light;
And mightier than these special wonders
The marvels daily in our[sight].”

There is another and even more important application of the text which may be noticed. It appears in the argument that the freedom and prevalence of sin in this world are incompatible with the doctrine of a divine administration of justice. It is asked, “ if an infinitely wise and mighty Ruler presides over all moral conduct

here, why do we not see the wicked punished and the good rewarded at once and fully in this life?" The immunity of evil, in so many cases, furnishes a pretext for practical atheism and confirmed wrong-doing. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Why should they resist the seductive temptation and adopt the difficult good? The heavens never thunder down a judgment on the sinner, nor do angels champion the right. All things continue as they were, whatever the moral quality of our lives. Therefore "because they have no changes, they fear not God."

And not only so, but true believers often suffer darkness of mind because of the same mystery. It is so difficult to reconcile what they see with what they believe. When they mark the prosperity of the wicked, that there are no bands in their death but their strength is firm, while truth and righteousness are often at a great disadvantage, "God's people return, and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them, and they say 'how doth God know? and is there any knowledge in the Most High?'"

These problems of moral life are confessedly among the most painful that ever engage our thoughts, nor can any solution be found for them, except that which lies in the direction of the truths already pointed out, in the divine treatment of nature and providence. As, in those instances, we have seen that the uniformity of law is an evidence for rather than against the presence and power of a law-giver, so in the realm of moral government we may argue for the reality of justice from the presence of mercy and forbearance. This is the plain teaching of Scripture on this subject. "We know that the judgement of God

is according to truth against them that practice such things. And reckonest thou this O man, who judgest them that practice such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth (is designed to lead) thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasures up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God: who will render to every man according to his works."

Behold then the real reason why there are "no changes" of moral trial and retribution in the sinner's life here and now. It is an evidence not of divine inability to punish sin or of indifference toward it, but of the mercy and pity of God toward the sinner. Your life and mine are not interrupted now by the arrests and arraignments of justice, only in order that we may have space for repentance and faith in the Savior. Judgment is suspended that Salvation may prevail. Shall we not then make this use of the divine forbearance? surely it would be a terrible abuse of such opportunities to treat them in any other way. What an awful aggravation of the sinner's guilt that he has "despised the riches of God's goodness and forbearance" by turning them into new occasions for self-indulgence! There can be no salvation for such a sin as that.

The pyrotechnics of patriotic celebration blaze out for a moment and then expire in darkness, leaving the stars to shine on age after age with the unfading splendor of the "astral city of our God." But the stars too will dim at last and fade away into oblivion, leaving the lights of eter-

nity to burn on through all the dateless years of the Most High. Oh, in those far aeons of celestial glory, may our happy souls find a place in the ranks of the redeemed, who made use of time as a preparation for heaven ! and not among those for whose neglect and unbelief is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

37

SCENES

THE

SILK-PERSEPOLIS OF SIN.

GEO. 13.—

THE traveler in Palestine is sure to visit one locality in that storied land. After enjoying its central and crowning feature, the Mother-city Jerusalem, he takes his way eastward. Descending the winding trail that leads from the table land of the interior, he gradually passes into another climate and a different region. The air grows warmer and is soon hot with Tropic fervor. The vegetation becomes more rank and luxurious, until the broad valley of the Jordan is reached. There orange groves and fig trees abound, clumps of oleander and thickets of verbena, tall palms and ancient sycamores. He stands beside the classic stream that has a more venerable name than the Tiber and a more extensive reputation than the Mississippi; and what memories crowd around him as he looks on the fords of Jordan! But he does not end his journey until he has followed the river to its mouth, and seen it lose itself in a long and narrow sheet of water that stretches away to the south between walls of craggy rock and beetling cliff.

It is a strange spectacle, unlike any other of the inland lakes of the world. Although but ten miles in length

by three in breadth, there is something weird and unnatural about that lagoon in the Orient. The shore is covered in places with a dark, offensive mud, on which a strong saline incrustation forms, interspersed with lumps of bitumen. The water seems clear and bright beneath the sun, but it is intensely salt and bitter to the taste ; and it is so dense that no living body will sink in it. No fish or marine vegetation appear to flourish in its depths, and the beach is strewn with the dry remains of objects which the Jordan has brought down to its inhospitable embrace.

Thus the mysterious pool lies beneath the torrid sky, while the barren mountains shut it in, and over it broods a haze of lifeless, hopeless languor, like the oppressive memory of a mournful past. And appropriately so, for this is the "Dead Sea," the "mare mortuum" of the ancients, the "asphaltic lake" of Josephus, the "Salt Sea" of Genesis : and its story is one of the most tragic which the Bible narrates.

As a geological feature this body of water is unique in the world, for it occupies the deepest chasm known to be filled by any inland sea. It lies 1300 feet below the level of the ocean, and it belongs to the period of the secondary formation, far antedating the origin of our own lakes. Its profound depression, and the fact that it has no outlet, render it a burning sink into which the river pours its current without causing it to overflow ; for the daily evaporation equals the daily income. Other lakes, such as Gennesareth in the north, are not only reservoirs but fountains. They receive in order to impart, and thus become vital factors in the general system of circulation. But the Dead Sea has no outlet ; it sends forth no stream to fertilize the earth. Receiving and engulfing the sweet

flood of the Jordan, it converts it into its own bitter nature; and so is an apt and gloomy picture of Sin, that all devouring element into which life pours its treasures without receiving any return of good, and in whose fatal abyss truth and goodness are lost forever.

The Biblical history of that selfish, sullen tarn among the blasted hills, is in keeping with its scientific character. Well may it be called, literally and figuratively, the "Dead Sea." We first read of it in the days of Abraham, when that deep, sunken valley was partly filled with a body of water which must always have been there, owing to the conformation of the earth's surface at that point, a deep fissure of prehistoric antiquity. The peculiar character of the water is due to the nature of the soil—strongly impregnated with salt and nitre. When Abraham in his wanderings arrived in that region, he found this salt sea, smaller than now, and surrounded by extensive plains, fertile and flourishing with vegetation, "even as the garden of the Lord." It was this beautiful scene which captivated Lot, his nephew: so that when the time came for them to separate in order to find room for their respective flocks and herds, and the young man was permitted by the elder to choose between the hill country and the lake region, he chose the latter.

A natural choice for youth to make! the sunny, smiling landscape of garden and field, all aglow with fruits and flowers, was far more pleasant to the sight than the colder and barer region of the heights. And how often is Lot's decision repeated by those who stand at the parting of the ways, and see on one side the soft slopes and golden prospects of self-indulgence, and on the other the upward paths of duty and the rigorous realms of law!

But they are sure to regret that choice in after time, when they reap its consequences. Abraham, dwelling on the hardy hilltops of a pure and vigorous life, is kept safe from contamination and led into a career of progress and true enrichment, while Lot goes down into a life of ease and pleasure which proves to be full of all kinds of danger.

There were many "cities" (villages) in the plain, and they were all the abode of a careless and profligate people. A tropic climate is never favorable to industry and sobriety, disposing men as it does to ease, indolence and sensuality. For this reason, among others, the cooler regions of the North have always been the favorite nursery of human greatness. Lot soon discovered this characteristic of the locality of his choice. The people of Sodom reflected the luxury of their environment, in their easy going, pleasure loving lives. They welcomed him to their banquets and games. But the nephew of Abraham, trained in the school of virtue, soon detected beneath the smooth surface of his surroundings, an abyss of slimy corruption. "The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord, exceedingly." Their depravity was a bye-word throughout the entire region. We are given to understand that Lot tried to resist and even correct the tides of vice by his example and protests. But in vain. "That righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, tormented his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds." How often must he have deplored the decision which had consigned him to such a home!

For at last the time came when the cities of the plain, like the antediluvian reprobates, had exhausted the patience of the Most High. The cup of their iniquity was full, and justice demanded their extirpation. But as Noah

was permitted to open the doors of mercy to his doomed generation, so was Abraham allowed to intercede for his nephew and his neighbors. Abraham!—what has he to do with the accursed race in the valley?—he the highland chief, remote from all contamination, on the breezy hills of industry and virtue? Well, the man of faith has just that concern for the sinner which God himself ever feels for the lost. It is the instinct of righteousness, whether in heaven or on earth, to plead the cause both of Justice and Love. And Abraham's heart goes out in pity for those whom his conscience condemns. He would save them from the fate which they richly deserve.

But what can be done? As for going down to those sinks of iniquity and preaching repentance and righteousness, that is out of the question, for Lot has exhausted such experiments. There is nothing left for Abraham but to pray—pray the prayer of the righteous man which availeth much. This office he fulfills with the tenderness and ardor of love. For the desperate wretches who have no idea of what he is doing for them, and who would scoff at the fact if they had known it, Abraham prays that immortal prayer which comes nearest to the supplication of the Cross of all the petitions in the Bible. How self-sacrificing, how importunate, how prevailing!—with its sliding scale of terms of mercy, lessening from the many to the few conditions, as the clinging hand of love lowers its hold to the last obtainable concession! But all in vain; as Abraham found in the early morning. Rising from his sleepless couch and hastening to the hill-top he looked southward, and saw the distance all dark with an awful shadow which filled the air, rolling up into the sky. Too well he knew what it meant. It was the signal for the destruction of the cities of

the plain as “the smoke of their burning went up as the smoke of a furnace.”

What took place during that memorable night is described with vivid distinctness in the story of Lot’s adventures. To the end of his life he never forgot the terrible scenes of those few fatal hours. How well he remembered them afterward and lived them over again!—the visit of the two princely strangers to his home, and the outrage threatened upon them by his ruffianly neighbors;—the warning by his guests in the morning of the impending doom, and their forcible seizure of him and his family, dragging them out of the city and compelling them to flee for their lives to the distant hills; all this remained in his memory forever. Then that hurried agonizing flight through the familiar groves and gardens, while the air was still cool with the dew, and the east yet reddening with the dawn;—until the scene began to change with a strange gloom in the sky, a thickening of the air, a burst of thunder from the heavens and flashes of lightning stabbing the earth, until the oil and bituminous wells took fire, and the ground began to blaze as with volcanic eruptions, and everything was enveloped in a general conflagration. Never did the fugitives forget their terrible flight through those fearful scenes until the village of refuge was reached and all were safe but one—the mother. She had dared to disregard the order to look not back, and lingering, had been caught in the fiery storm and stifled with the heat and gas. Sinking to the earth she had been covered with the nitro-sulphurous matter, until a mere heap of calcined incrustation was all that remained—to serve the future as the monument of “Lot’s wife.”

Such was the catastrophe of the cities of the plain

nearly 4000 years ago. And it is of that tragedy that the sullen lifeless tarn, deep sunken amid the arid cliffs of Palestine, reminds the traveler to this day.

The student of history will find a remarkable parallel to this event in the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum in the first century of the Christian era. These were cities of wealth and culture, surrounded by the charms of Tropical scenery ; but they were the abodes of luxury and vice. And in a few hours the Italian landscape, so fair and rich, was overwhelmed with a ruin which remains to the present time as a mass of ashen desolation. There too, among the lava-covered relics recently exhumed, is often found the remains of some poor fugitive overtaken like the Hebrew woman, and turned to stone by the cruel storm.

But there is no Vesuvius by the Dead Sea to supply the means of a volcanic outburst, such as would account for the story in Genesis. We have no need however to resort to such an explanation. The nature of the soil in that region, so full of nitrous matter, would furnish the means of a general conflagration when struck by lightning from the sky. The shore of the Dead Sea resembles in this respect the region of Baku on the Caspian, where fissures in the earth pour out liquid bitumen in abundance, and others give forth inflammable gas which burns quickly and long when ignited. In the region of our own oil wells and gas fountains, all the materials for a tremendous conflagration exist, whenever a shaft of fire from the sky strikes the combustible earth.

We see then how nature had provided for the miracle of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Built on a foundation of bitumen, the very houses composed of incendiary material, the inhabitants were living in the midst

of a powder magazine, though they knew it not; and it only required an electric storm of unusual severity to set fire to the inflammable earth, and whelm everything in a blazing storm. Such a disaster might well be described by an eye witness in the words of scripture—"the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants, and that which grew upon the ground."

We may use this fell catastrophe as the text for a sermon on this topic—*The self-destroying properties of sin.* For it is evident that sinfulness contains in its own nature the main elements of its own punishment. We are accustomed to regard physical and moral evil as consisting in the violation of external law, and as receiving the inflictions of justice from without. And this view is correct in so far as it embraces our objective relations to the divine government. But there is another view, equally true and even more important, which considers the law of God as inwrought in our own nature, and operating through the forces and experience of our own life. This may be called the subjective theory of guilt and justice. According to it, punishment is not merely an infliction descending from above—like the fiery storm which fell from the skies on the doomed cities of the plains. The full administration of justice involves the moral being of the sinner, which will furnish the conditions of divine visitation, as the combustible soil on which Sodom was built burst into flame at the touch of the lightning.

This is true. Human nature is an inflammable thing. It is composed of elements which are capable of intensest pleasure or of bitterest pain. When under the influ-

ences of good, it is like the plain of the Jordan beneath the Tropic sun and rain—bright and blooming as the garden of the Lord. But when exposed to the visitations of judgment, it will become a Gehenna of destruction. Think of the *conscience*, that inner voice of God whose office is to be an echo of the divine law; how it can fill the life with blessedness or blight! Think of the *memory*, with its strange power of reproducing the past—of the *imagination* with its command of the future—of all the delicate sensibilities which hopes and fears can set in motion—of the nervous capacities and mysterious psychic forces which lie beneath our self-consciousness but may at any momentwhelm us with their outbursts of emotion—think of these things and behold in them the machinery of judgment which God has ordained for his own use. What need has he to resort to a special supernatural arraignment of the soul, when in each heart there is a Court Room where the trial can be conducted? There will indeed be a Day of Wrath and revelation of the righteous judgments of God against the wrong-doers: but the administration of divine justice is already begun in the guilty soul itself. Even here and now in every sinner's nature his case is being tried. As soon as sin is committed the conscience begins to impeach the offender, and the moral law to utter sentence. This procedure may be delayed or ignored by selfish interference; and therefore a final arraignment before the Infinite tribunal will be needed, to give to Justice its complete satisfaction.

But how sternly strict are the trials and condemnations even now in process! The self-conviction of the sensualist is a terrible thing, when the appetites that he has perverted and the passions that have been indulged, turn

into tormenting demons which make his life on earth a hell, before death comes to complete his perdition. How does selfishness procure its own punishment, in the withering and wasting effects of moral congestion which reduce life to a skeleton, and disable even the miser for enjoying the gold that he clutches! Consider what an unchecked temper, an unbridled pugnacity, may result in. Such forces turn into riotous incendiaries, that may at any moment fill the life with burning inflammations or positive destruction. And so with all the tendencies of evil. They are sure to recoil on their own origin—he that soweth the wind shall reap the whirlwind. And when we take into account the fact that we never really forget anything, but that all of our past remains stored up in the mysterious recesses of the soul, ready to be developed like the invisible image of the photograph plate, whenever the suitable conditions are provided, we get a still clearer idea of the hold which Justice has upon the moral nature of man.

Who then can escape from the divine arraignment?—let him first try to get away from himself. As well might Sodom change its site for an incombustible region, as that the sinner should evade his doom. Even in this world it begins in striking returns of penalty upon the criminal. Jacob deceives his father with a lie, which was repeated to him by his own sons in after years. David procures the murder of Uriah, to be dethroned at last by Absalom through jealousy of Bathsheba's son. Haman is executed on the gallows he had built for Mordecai, and Judas is buried in a field purchased with the silver for which he had betrayed his Master. Thus like to like. “He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and cut them off in their own sins.”

Jesus warned the dwellers in Capernaum that it would be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for them. He meant that as greater light is come into the world, so is sin now more culpable, and punishment more severe, than when less was known of God and of his law. And his meaning also involved that modern sin, like ancient sin, is capable of becoming its own convicter and punisher. Can we not understand this when we remember the terrible fate of Slavery and its adherents—how that foul system brought down on its own head the doom it deserved, and for every drop of blood drawn from the back of the slave, more drops must flow from the veins of the white man? May it not be then that Intemperance and Corruption and Infidelity will yet reap in similar manner the harvests of seed which they have sown?

Science assures us that our earth carries its fate in its own heart. All the materials for a universal conflagration exist in the elements around us—waiting only for the signal of combustion. Then shall come the great and terrible Day of the Lord when the elements shall melt with fervent heat—the earth shall be burned up. But this is only a picture of the possibilities of ruin that lie dormant in the human soul.

Here is Sodom in our own sinful nature. Here is the material for self-indulgence and self-punishment. If then we are still amid the false and fatal pleasures of this world, let us heed the warning which came to Lot—"Escape for thy life! look not behind thee nor stay in all the plain! escape to the mountains lest thou be consumed."

For there the Asylum is—not far away—the sweet safe welcome of the heart of Jesus. And they who flee for refuge

to this hope set before them, will find that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ. His blood cleanseth from all sin. His intercession avails for all mercy and peace. He is able to keep what we have committed to him ; and nothing, neither life nor death, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

XVI. RIGHTS AND DUTIES.

"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."
—LUKE 6:31.

AT THE National Assembly of France in 1789, when the "Declaration of the Rights of Man" was being discussed, Gregoire said "Write at the head of the Declaration the name of God, or you establish rights without duties; which is but another thing for proclaiming Force to be supreme." The assembly refused, and the Reign of Terror soon revealed what need there is of checking human freedom with divine authority. The Golden Rule, enunciated by our Lord, is a perfect expression of this principle. "Do as ye would be done by" means that for every right that you may claim, there is a duty for you to perform. And the best way to secure your rights is to perform your duties. This principle underlies all the relations of responsible life. Action and reaction are the two prime factors of corporate existence. What we do to others and what they do to us, are the twin hemispheres of the social globe—in a normal state of affairs. But as matter of fact, these relations are continually being deranged. Our rights eclipse our duties, or our duties obscure our rights. In the one case man becomes a despot, in the other he is a slave. The one gets all without giving, and is a miser. The other gives all without getting, and

is a spendthrift. Here then is one of the grave problems of life—how to adjust our relations to others, so as to be true both to ourselves and to them. The solution is found in the Savior's words—“As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.” Whoever can reduce this rule to practice, will realize the ideal of human society.

There is no need to say that this conception of life is not the current or popular one. “Every man for himself” is the motto of this world. You are traveling, and have frequent occasion for observing the truth of this statement. Entering a railroad car, you see nearly all the seats occupied by one person in each, who has piled his luggage beside him so as to fill the section, and is busy reading a paper or looking out of the window, while disconsolate people wander past, searching in vain for a seat. After the train starts, you may find yourself chilled or choked from an open window, which some one in front has raised in bland indifference to the fact that smoke and dust are pouring in on the unfortunates behind. (Admiral Farragut caught his death cold from such a cause.) You are on a steamboat, and have a very positive reason to know that certain persons are using their pipes or cigars just where the fumes of tobacco fill the air that others must breathe. You stop at a hotel and are kept awake at night by loud talking and laughing in the next room, or are aroused in the early morning by the noisy tread of those who are departing, without a thought of the disturbance they are making. At a lecture or concert, you have seen an audience distracted in their attention by late arrivals who must find their seats; and perhaps you have had your own prospect of the stage entirely cut off by some

obstruction in the shape of a fashionable hat worn in front of you. Now you know very well that none of those annoyances were intentional. Those people were not malicious or willfully rude. They were merely thoughtless about everything save their own concerns. And you might find them very resentful of any invasion of their own convenience.

But go on with this kind of observation, and you may make a still more impressive discovery. It is that you have been doing just such things yourself. Now that your eyes are opened, you see that others may have been discommoded by you at times; you have been standing in another person's light, or letting in on him sudden drafts, or elbowing some one out of the way—yet all without meaning or even knowing it. You were simply thinking about yourself all the time.

Extend the view over society, through business life, political, professional or even national affairs, and see if there is a range of human experience anywhere that does not fall within the jurisdiction of the Golden Rule. What a change would be brought about in all the relations of mankind, if the law of considerateness could be enforced, and every one do to others as he would be treated by them! The neglect of this principle is at the root of many if not most of the conflicts and injuries of the world. It is not always deliberate ill will that makes the mischief we deplore. Malice, plotting treachery, envy and revenge, are active destructionists. But for one evil wrought by them, there are many which are born of mere carelessness, neglect of duty or inattention to the rights of others. If anyone desires to harm his kind, he need not be a robber or a murderer. Let him be merely selfish, caring only

for himself, and giving no heed to the duties he owes to society. This will render him the occasion, if not the cause, of more harm than he dreams of. His will be the confession at last—

“ Alas ! I have walked through life,
Too heedless where I trod ;
Nay, helping to trample my fellow men,
And fill the burial sod.

The wounds I might have healed !
The human sorrow and smart !
And yet it never was in my mind
To play so ill a part.

But evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as by want of heart.”

It is one of the precepts of scripture that we should “look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” That is, be considerate ; take other people into the account ; remember that they have as real a place in the world as you have ; your rights toward them must be balanced by their claims on you. Consider them therefore and your relations to them. This is true morality, “ live and let live.” But how often is it disregarded ! We hear the question asked “is not every man entitled to manage his affairs in his own way?” as though there could be no reasonable doubt as to the answer. But both law and equity reply in the negative. As matter of fact no one, living in society, can have his own way absolutely about anything. He must adjust his life to that of others at every step. He cannot buy or sell property, on a large scale, except as the law directs ; nor can he hold that property without paying taxes on it. He may not build a house or barn, in a city, without reference to his neighbor’s welfare ; nor if about to die, can he be-

queateth his property to others except in accordance with legal forms. If he is a manufacturer, he must regulate his prices by the market if he would succeed. He cannot employ labor more than so many hours a day, nor can he work his hands on Sunday or legal holidays, nor can he manufacture poisons or explosives just as he pleases. In some states he is not allowed to make or sell intoxicants at all. What is true of him is also true in degree of all buyers and sellers. The entire commercial world is filled with restrictions of personal freedom. Every one who has dealings with his fellow men, is bound to consider other interests than his own.

As with the employer, so with the employé. He may or may not enter another's service, at his option; but once employed, his time, strength, capacity are no longer his own. The master cannot make unreasonable exactions of the servant, and the servant is bound to consider in all things the interest of the master. In fact, nowhere do we find unqualified independence except in the isolation of the wilderness. (And, even there the hermit is fettered fast to the order of nature, which he cannot disregard for a moment with impunity.) But as long as men elect to live together in the terms of society, so long must the rights of each be conditioned by the needs of all. And we see the justice and reason of this. In no other way is coöperation possible. What we concede to others is more than made up by their concessions to us. Give and it shall be given to you. Do unto others as ye would that they should do to you, and you will receive a return in kind.

This principle of considerateness is capable of personal and of collective application. It ought to become

the law of life in all of its operations. How soon would it solve the problem of the complications of Labor and Capital! If master and servant were to reciprocate in all things, there would be no need of arbitration between them. This is already evident in profit-sharing establishments, where all the parties concerned find their interests enhanced by the good of each. "No man liveth to himself." "Ye are members one of another." These old Bible precepts are becoming the basis of a new Political Economy. The great Socialistic movements of the present day are flowing in the direction of a readjustment of the elements of society. The idea that every man must look out for himself, and producer and consumer be left to fight out their own battles, is fast becoming obsolete. A new era is dawning—of catholicity—of mutual rights and reciprocal obligations. One sign of this is the popular demand for arbitration; another is the disposition of corporations to publish their defense to the public. Consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, society is drifting toward a larger and more generous view of rights and duties. But how much better than all these tardy and forced methods of conciliation would be the New Testament plan of a free moral impulse! All of our personal and collective disagreements would be settled at once, and a repetition of them forever prevented, if men would simply agree to practice the Golden Rule. Jesus of Nazareth was far ahead of his day, and he is still in advance of the present time with all its philosophy, when he urged "give and it shall be given unto you: good measure, heaped up, pressed down and running over shall men pour into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

Many books have been published on the subject of *good manners*. We have manuals of etiquette, showing the forms of conduct which society observes and requires. And these are not to be disregarded by those who would stand well with their kind; for appearances are something with every one, they are everything with some. What is called Fashion is often a capricious and arbitrary despot, whom to serve is inconsistent with moral freedom and self-respect. Nevertheless there is a consensus of social custom in matters of dress and decorum, which is natural and reasonable, and which it is not wise to disregard. Every one owes something to public opinion in the support of the forms of society. It is rude and selfish to pride one's self on oddities of garb and eccentricities of demeanor. One may be just as proud of his singularity, as others are of their conformity. To resist utterly the style of the day may be as offensive to good taste as to be slavishly devoted to it. A reasonable deference to the current mode is our personal contribution to the harmonies of society. This is the true gentility—such a degree of deference to other's opinions as will show our sympathy, without sacrificing our individuality.

But the best handbook of politeness ever published is one that is not often referred to as such. It is the Bible. This ancient book abounds not only in principles but in precepts which might well be studied by all who would smooth and decorate the surface of life. What golden words are these! "As ye have opportunity do good to all men." "Be pitiful, be courteous." "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." "In honor preferring one another." "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." If such ideals

could be realized in personal character and behavior, would it not go far toward making of any person a lady, a gentleman, in the best sense of the term? Certainly no one need fear the conventionalities of society, who is able to wear the garb which genuine Christianity can provide. For true religion is sure to promote that civility, that deference of amiable deportment which is the essence of courtesy. It was with this in mind that Decker, the old English poet, said that Jesus of Nazareth was

“The first true gentleman that ever breathed.”

He referred to that spirit of love and purity which shone through all the words and ways of the Son of Mary, filling them with beauty and dignity. This is what Coleridge meant when he said that “religion is in its essence the most gentlemanly thing in the world.” It is what Emerson had in mind when he wrote “it is the property of the religious spirit to be the most refining of all influences.”

Have we made enough of this function of the Gospel —its sweetening and softening effect on the aspects and attitudes of life? Yet this is part of its mission in the world, and by no means the least important part. To smooth down the shaggy coat of human appearances, to tame and teach the rude, to replace ill temper with urbanity and awkwardness with grace, to show people how to live easily and pleasantly with each other instead of harshly and painfully, to brighten the plain into beauty and add ornaments to the bare robe of life, to set the plodding footsteps to music so that progress may be along the curving lines of rhythmic and enjoyable movement: surely this is something worth the doing in such a world as this. When we see how the barbarisms of life embitter it, how churlish-

ness and acrimony and austerity add to the burden of existence, and the way of duty is made difficult by its roughness, O what frequent occasion we have to prize whatever makes for gentleness and good humor and hospitality—in short for fine manners!

Of course it must be noted, if only in parenthesis, that there is far too much of false gentility in this world. It is a mere varnish of style, a veneer of show. It can be taught by the dancing master. It can be put on or off like a company coat. And it may, it often does, cover a hard heart, a foul spirit. Before you decide whether a person is a lady or a gentleman, observe him or her when off their guard; how does she treat her servants? how does he speak to a washerwoman? It is one thing to make a fine show in a parlor, and quite another to carry fine manners into a hovel or a hospital. The world is growing tired of theatrical chivalry. It asks now for the courtesy of good deeds, the politeness of character. Between the sexes a new era is opening. The woman of today resents the language of gallantry, once so popular. She refuses to be petted or patronized, favored or flattered. What she asks for is to be freed from false conditions, and greeted with the sympathetic heart and the helping hand.

For the ideal state of which we speak, when all shall regard the rights of each and each be mindful of the rights of all, we need not consult such prognostications as "Looking Backward" or "Letters from Altruria." It is not by governmental interference or by any mode of social evolution, that the final adjustments of life are to be reached. Rather it is by that spirit of "Peace on earth, good will to men," which Jesus Christ embodied and bequeathed. There should we look for the ideal man, the

ideal woman, for whom society is waiting. He and she will appear in the one with whom religion is more than a theological system or an ecclesiastical form; it is a life of spiritualized activity—a life of physical, social, intellectual development after the divine plan. For when that conception of human character and conduct is realized in this world, we shall see the Grecian beauty, the Roman power, the Hebrew faith, combined in a new and nobler humanity than has yet appeared on this earth. To this end the specific means to be used has been provided by the Gospel. It is “Christ in you.” An indwelling and possessing divinity is the secret of all that is pure and strong and graceful.

“ As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
So when Christ dwells within a human soul
All heaven’s own sweetness seems around it thrown.”

The same word once denoted manners and morals. Perhaps there was a time when appearance and reality were so true to each other that beauty in the one was guarantee of excellence in the other. That time is past however. And now we need a larger term to embrace them both—a word like “religion” which ought to mean the refinement of the outer life, as well as the purity of the inner. Nor is this asking too much: for we are told by Inspiration that “godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.”

XVII.

JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

"And Joseph was brought down to Egypt."—GEN. 39:1.

IN THE year 1895 B. C. Egypt was the center of the civilized portion of the ancient world. And in this year 1895 A. D. it remains peerless in its power to interest the minds of all educated people. No other portion of the earth's surface has the peculiar place in history which belongs to the land of the Nile. With each winter an increasing tide of tourists flows toward the Orient to gaze upon the birthplace of civilization.

But they see there only the ruins of a mighty past. Dust and debris cover the sites of empires and eras. The sand of the desert lies heaped around the empty tomb and fallen obelisk, while broken figures and defaced statues are all that remain of great cities and temples. The Sphynx emerges from the desolation "staring right on with calm eternal eyes," and the Pyramids maintain their hoary preeminence, but it is only as Death keeps watch over oblivion. Vacant and solitary, the ancient land yields only an empty echo to the archæologist and the traveler who explore its remains, while classic Nilus

"flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands,
Like a grave mighty thought threading a dream."

But how different the scene when Joseph was brought down to Egypt 3600 years ago! Then that long valley was the pulsing heart of the world's commerce, business,

learning and enterprise. On both sides of the river which was its parent and support, rose the stately architecture of the richest nation on earth. Greece and Rome were then unborn, and Babylon and Nineveh still in their youth ; but Egypt was filled with cities, temples, and fortifications. All along the valley, solemn browed portals opened the way to long colonnades of sphynxes, that led to dark low temples whose massive architecture testified to a religion of mystery and might. White robed priests, in bannered processions, enlivened every prospect with their impressive rites, that gave to life and death and immortality a religious aspect and importance. It was also a land rich in schools and universities, where much of our modern knowledge was anticipated. There was the birthplace of arithmetic and geometry. Astronomy was in an advanced stage of culture. Chemistry, medicine and anatomy were well developed (after the ancient fashion) while literature in all of its branches, and music, painting, sculpture and architecture, were carefully studied. It was an age and a country of popular education, of general refinement and of abounding wealth and enterprise. Nor do we know how old that ancient empire was then, or when its far-stretching dynasties began their primeval reign.

But Joseph had no care for all those wonders when he was brought down to Egypt. A mere boy, the child of a pleasant home amid the hills of Palestine, where he had been nourished with paternal pride and had known only the luxuries of life, he had been suddenly cast down from his privileges by the black-hearted jealousy of his own brethren. Cruel hands had torn off the long robe of distinction, and had hurled him into an abyss of shame and agony, of which the pit in Dothan was but a symbol.

Then to consummate their crime, his father's sons had sold him into slavery and had seen him dragged off, weeping and pleading in vain, as one of a fettered gang, for some market place in the far off South. Thus they wreaked their revenge on the young dreamer who had dared to predict that their sheaves would bow down to his sheaf, and the sun, moon and stars do obeisance to him. Let him go, and good riddance! the upstart favorite of their father's foolish preference. Let the distance bury him out of sight and thought, to disturb them no more. Egypt lies outside of their world. Does it, O sons of Jacob? Be not too sure of that!

And so it came to pass that the young Hebrew, about seventeen years old, entered Egypt by the lowest and most painful passage possible. His first impressions of that magnificent land must have been of the darkest character. Exposed for sale in the market place, he was purchased for the household of Potiphar, the Head of the State Police, and thus became a part of the great establishment of that officer. He was an eminent functionary, being entrusted with the execution of the laws, the punishment of offences, and the guardianship of the royal person. He had a large force of soldiers and slaves at his disposal. Recently discovered pictures on the walls of Egyptian tombs, and the writings on papyrus rolls now deciphered, enable us to reproduce those ancient establishments. There we see gangs of slaves driven along and exposed for sale; in one place Syrian slaves are noted as commanding the best price for a superior article; and the menial tasks and hardships thus depicted bring the young son of Jacob before us just as he was in his degradation.

But one thing the mural paintings do not express.

They cannot show what the Bible clearly sets forth in the words, "the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man." No earthly picture could portray the Divine Providence which was by the side of that Syrian slave like an angel of light, to cheer, strengthen and give him favor with his masters. But so it was. That child of the Covenant was not abandoned to despair, but was so energized with courage and intelligent zeal, that "Joseph's master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand." As the result of this faithfulness to duty and efficiency in his service, "Joseph found grace in his sight, and he made him to be overseer over his house; and all that he had he put into his hand."

Such is ever the outward result of inward purity and power. Spirituality in the heart means practical usefulness in the life. For godliness is profitable unto all, having promise of the life that now is, in all of the utilities and true good of this world, as well as of that which is to come. And more: personal piety is a blessing to others than its possessor. Like light and heat it has a radiating, diffusive power. "The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake, and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field."

And now is not this youth on the highway of progress at last, and is he not beyond the reach of envy and opposition? No, the process of preparation is not yet complete for the great destiny in store for him. Some remains of the vanity and self-will which paternal indulgence had aroused in him, may still lurk in his nature, and therefore the iron must go back to the furnace to be hardened into steel. The miserable story of his cruel prostration to

the plight of a felon in his cell, is too familiar to be told again. But it may be noticed that Egyptology has thrown light on this, as on many other episodes of this history. The researches of Wilkinson, Rawlinson and others have reproduced the home life of those ancient times very clearly; and from them we learn that the position of woman in that age and land was one of peculiar freedom. She was not as in other countries a slave, but was often the honored head of a household, treated as an equal by the husband and accustomed to move freely in society. This explains the incidents of Joseph's trial and fall. And it should be remarked that an ancient roll, dated 1600 B. C., has been discovered in an Egyptian tomb, which presents a narrative called the "Story of the Brothers." It is almost an exact counterpart of the record in the 39th chapter of Genesis.

The result for Joseph was disgrace, punishment, captivity. And as the gloom of the dungeon engulfed the young Hebrew, his last and greatest trial came upon him. Not now a boy, but a well-developed man of twenty-eight, accustomed to responsibility and proud of his success, how he must have writhed with shame under such an unmerited calamity! What tears and groans and outcries from his bleeding heart! Yes, and what temptations to doubt the faithfulness of God and resent the discipline of his mysterious will! Some hearts would have failed to endure such a test as this, and have lapsed into unbelief and resentment. But the faith of Joseph and his patience survived the trial, and he rose superior to his shame with new love and hope. The result was that his imprisonment, like his slavery, became a new occasion for divine interference and blessing—"the Lord was with Joseph

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and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison : and he committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners ; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it; and the keeper of the prison looked not to anything, because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper."

What does this mean but the adaptability of divine grace to the lowest conditions, and the power of the Spirit to utilize the most untoward events for the education of the soul. For this painful experience was precisely what was needed to complete the preparation of Joseph for his transcendent career. What was that? It was to place this Syrian slave on a throne of empire and entrust him with the means of saving a nation. But how could such an incredible transition be effected? Behold the winding way of providential process.

Joseph must go to prison, for there only could he be brought into contact with certain members of the court who had access to the monarch. In that prison, by his moral character, he becomes a trusted person who receives charge of the butler and baker from the palace. There he hears from them the story of their dreams, and by inspiration from God he is able to interpret them. This gives him a claim on the chief butler's gratitude which impels him, after his return to the royal favor, to remember Joseph and recommend him to the king, when the monarch in his turn is troubled by mysterious dreams. Then the Hebrew is summoned to the palace, and there after two years of dreary imprisonment the doors open into a new avenue of life: he is summoned by the voice of Destiny to the most tremendous change ever passed through by a human being.

What a journey that—from the prison to the palace ! We see the ancient city of Memphis stretching its vast expanse beneath a cloudless sky ; a broad avenue, granite-paved, leading through it, bordered with rows of gigantic sphynxes. Along this royal way the recent captive is led by a court official until they reach a lofty Pylon, or gateway, which admits to the palace enclosure. Here a huge monolith, inscribed with hieroglyphics, is seen towering above the walls. A beautiful lake, fringed with trees and sculptured columns, meets the eye, and beyond it extends the grand and gloomy facade of the palace. (Egyptian architecture knew nothing of the pillared brightness of Greece, or the noble arch of Rome. Its characteristic features were massive grandeur and dark mystery—emblems of its recondite learning and occult religion.)

Beneath the frowning front of that majestic pile the young Hebrew is led into a vast and dimly lighted hall, whose walls are rich with paintings and with columns lotus crowned. They pass between serried ranks of guards and officials, through one portal after another, as hall beyond hall is traversed in this order of increasing splendor. At last the throne room is reached. Two towering images of Osiris and Isis guard it. White-robed priests and armor-clad warriors line it with ceremony. And there, above the hushed and reverent throng, on his radiant throne, presides the Sacred One whom all men worship, Pharaoh, son of the Sun. Robed in snowy vestments fringed with gold, his head crowned with the double tiara of Upper and Lower Egypt, on his hand the royal signet—such is Aphobis, one of the Shepherd or Asiatic kings, whose alien dynasty (the 19th in Egyptian annals) now holds the land by right of conquest.

In that sublime presence an ordinary man, just from a dungeon, would have been dumb and useless. But not so with Joseph. A long and severe discipline has trained him to self-knowledge and self-control. A faith in God which has been tested and strengthened by adversity, inspires him now with courage and confidence. And so he stands before the throne, bathed and shaven according to the custom of that most cleanly of people, robed in the court dress of simple white. But such is the beauty of his fresh complexion, blue eyes and light hair, his lofty brow and resolute look—so different from the dark African type and the servile mien of those around him, and so self-possessed and manly is his demeanor, that the heart of the monarch opens to him at once. He tells him his dreams. Without hesitation the Hebrew furnishes an interpretation. In the name of his God, he foretells that seven years of plenty are about to enrich the land, and that they will be followed by seven years of sterility. It is therefore the duty of the king to provide for the time of famine by laying up resources for future use. Such is his advice, and the king proceeds to act upon it at once. He accepts Joseph as a true diviner, and authorizes him to execute his own plan. “See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt! and he took off his ring and put it on Joseph’s hand and arrayed him in vesture of fine linen, and put a gold chain on his neck and made him ride in the second chariot, and they cried before him, ‘Bow the knee;’ and he made him ruler over all the land.”

This reads like a story from the Arabian Nights—a fairy tale of history. But Oriental life corroborates it even now. Such abrupt and startling transitions from the lowest to the highest fortunes have always been fre-

quent under despotic governments. The Prime Minister of Egypt in 1893, Riaz Pasha, was brought to that country in his boyhood as a slave. The Grand Vizier of Turkey, not long ago, was a man who had been suddenly elevated from poverty to royal favor by the will of a capricious despot. The Bible stories of Joseph, Mordecai and Daniel, have this confirmation.

But now look at this young man. Only thirty years of age, a foreigner by birth, and only yesterday a hopeless prisoner under the criminal law, he is now next to the monarch in honor and power. Crowned and robed in splendor, he is borne in a royal chariot to a palace home, where a rich establishment surrounds him with all that luxury and rank can command. Can it be real? Is not this wonderful change a dream from which he may at any moment awake? And if it is real, how can he bear such a sudden and tremendous elevation? Will not its exactions overburden his capacity, or may not its intoxication demoralize his moral character? Ah, now we see the value of his severe training in the school of adversity. His nature is strong with qualities which trial can develop. In the furnace the iron has become steel; for now, as before, the Lord is with Joseph, and he is a prosperous man on the summit of pride as in the depths of humiliation.

From this point on, the story of his life becomes a national narrative. Everything occurs as he had foretold. The seven years of plenty fill the land with overflowing harvests, which the Grand Vizier promptly avails himself of by a well organized system of economy. While the improvident people are wasting their excessive wealth, his officials are filling the public granaries; so that when the

septennial of drought and destitution arrives he is ready for the crisis. During seven years the inundations of the river cease, and the crops fail. The people soon consume their own stores and then universal famine would be their fate, but for the provident care of "Zaphnath-paaneah" the Hebrew Vizier. He alone has food to supply the needs of the people. But not gratuitously. As long as they have the means, they must pay for what they get, with money, with their cattle, and finally with their own freedom. Thus are they kept alive by the liberal and yet exacting policy of a paternal government.

This policy has been criticized. It has been contended that Joseph had no right to take advantage of the desperate plight of a starving people to despoil them of their property. He should have fed them freely, without conditions. Indeed it has been claimed that his system was an anticipation of the modern speculator or monopolist, who finds in the extreme needs of the public an opportunity for his own rapacity. But consider the real differences between the two cases compared. In the first place, Joseph did not create the need which he supplied. This is the course of the monopolist who first gets possession of a certain range of resources, and then creates an artificial scarcity which he alone can meet. So far from this being the policy of Joseph, he had foretold the emergency of famine and urged everyone to prepare for it. But surely no one is to be blamed because of the preeminence which his own forethought gives him at others' expense.

Again, the policy of gratuitous distribution, which Joseph is blamed for not adopting, has been condemned by the experience of nations. This policy has been the

favorite system of despotic governments in all ages, but it has invariably resulted in demoralizing those who were thus assisted. Our best political economy approves the course of Joseph in requiring that the people be treated on the principle of equivalents. As for their reduction to slavery by his requirements, it is enough to say that he merely made them wards of the crown, putting them on the list of beneficiaries in return for their service to the government. They were really better off than ever before. Thus the young Hebrew ruler showed himself to be a statesman far in advance of his day. Not only did he save a great nation from a miserable fate of starvation, but he did this by a well planned and carefully executed system of preventive measures, which the wisest economist of the present day could not improve upon.

We can imagine then how high and wide his fame must have become in that land and era. Through the valley of the Nile and far beyond its borders, the reputation of Zaphnath was spread by the tongues of thankful men. And thus it reached at last the ears of a family of shepherds among the hills of a region northeast of Egypt, where the famine was wasting the land of Palestine, and a father and his eleven sons were beginning to suffer from want.

Now comes the last of the great series of pictures with which this eventful history abounds. We see the lord of Egypt in his home. Archaeology enables us to reproduce the scene. It shows us the vast walled enclosure of a nobleman's residence, like a fortified city with its gates, guards and banners. Within this, extensive gardens, filled with trees and flowers and vegetable beds, form a central Paradise of shade and fountains and many

colors. Here rises the mansion, long and low, its rooms opening on cool verandas, the walls bright with pictures, and furniture of all kinds in profusion. The banqueting hall is replete with festal luxuries. This luxurious abode is surrounded with quarters for an army of servants of all grades—from the priest and magician, to the artisan and menial. The Egyptians were renowned for the perfection of their domestic establishments.

And here sits Zaphnath-paaneah on the calm summit of worldly prosperity, surrounded by the highest honors of the most eminent nation in the world. But pride has no place in his heart, nor is there a trace of selfish enjoyment in the satisfaction of his success. The Lord is with him still. And as he often looks back over the strange course of his adventurous career, and marks the interpositions of Providence in his behalf, he is reminded of his debt to the God of his fathers. Doubtless he wonders whether the cruel wrong once done him by his brethren will ever be redressed in this life, and his heart often yearns toward the home of his childhood. Will that loving father ever know the real fate of his favorite son? But in his utmost dreams it never occurs to him that Providence has still another trial in store for him, and destiny another surprise.

One day a group of travel-worn, rudely clad shepherds from a foreign land, come to his disbursing office to buy food. They form only one of numerous parties drawn thither from all the regions around Egypt, for the same purpose. There is nothing to distinguish them from many others, as they come into the august presence of the great ruler; and at sight of him—sitting grand and grave as Egypt's lord should be—they stand awe-struck in their

uncouth simplicity. They have never witnessed such a spectacle, and know not what to make of the keen gaze bent on them by majestic Zaphnath.

For he recognizes them. Swift as a shadow the twenty three years that have intervened disappear, and Joseph is again a boy in the hands of these very men on that fatal morning in Dothan. He sees their wrathful faces, feels their despoiling hands and sinks beneath their ruthless vengeance. All this comes back to him with thrilling reality, as he looks upon them now, and beholds his early visions at last fulfilled, their sheaves are bowing down to his sheaf. “ And Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed of them.”

What a tableau of poetic justice—of long delayed but perfect retribution! In the hands of Æschylus or Shakespeare, this theme would have been wrought into an elaborate epic of fate. But the Bible story, in its artless simplicity, depicts a scene of life-like effect. What dramatist could embellish the picture of Joseph’s intense but concealed agitation, the struggle between the bursting affection of his heart, and the stern sense of justice which must be satisfied? We see the balance of a symmetrical nature in his method of dealing with the criminals—leading them on to a just sense of their own ill-desert, involving them in a plot of self-detection, and so bringing them to the point of contrition and confession. Then how touching the brotherly grace of his pardon, the tearful tenderness with which he takes them to his heart and more than forgives their sins, the glad generosity that lifts them all to a share in his own prosperity and is not content until father and brothers are established with him in the royal favor! If this story had been published by itself, apart

from scriptural associations, it would have ranked with the most thrilling romances—the most beautiful moral pictures of literature.

Its lessons for us lie upon the surface, for all to read. It teaches the manifoldness of the grace indicated by the words—"the Lord was with Joseph." The divine presence was to him a guide from first to last, leading him from the lowest depth to the highest height of earthly fortune. The divine guardianship was to him a protection from the perils of adversity and of prosperity. It rendered him a faithful servant, a capable overseer, a wise ruler, and at last a righteous judge. It endowed him with the virtues of modest subordination and of discreet supremacy. At no time and in no place was he forsaken or poorly equipped for whatever demands the dangers of duty or of destiny could impose. And in all this, Joseph's career remains for the instruction of those who must make their way through this present evil world. It should be a Gospel for the slave, a hand-book of guidance for the young, a manual for the employer and the arbiter of others' fate. For the same obstacles lie still in the paths of progress, and the same God is able and willing to lead and preserve all those who put their trust in Him. Let Joseph's firm faith be ours, his patience, humility and perseverance, and we too will find that the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Egyptologists report that they find no mention of Zaphnath-paaneah on any of the monuments or hieroglyphic records as yet deciphered. The mummy of Seti I, the Pharaoh whose daughter adopted the infant Moses, has been recognized, and also that of Rameses II, the

tyrant of the persecution. But of the kings of the previous dynasties there is no memento, perhaps for the reason that they were of an alien race who were hated by the native Egyptians and expelled by them from the empire. This would explain the absence of their names from the monuments, whence they were probably erased by the conquerors. It would also account for the ill-will of the new Pharaohs toward the Israelites. As for the remains of the great ruler, we are told in the Bible that his embalmed body was taken by the Hebrews with them at the Exodus, according to his own request before he died, and conveyed to Canaan, where it was interred in a Mausoleum which some believe may still be seen near Shechem in Samaria.

But no hieroglyphic inscription on obelisk or temple wall is needed to keep alive the name and fame of Joseph. His monument is a loftier one than any of the pyramids, and it will endure when Sphynx and Memnon have mouldered back to dust. On the pages of divine inspiration his story shines forever, and in the hearts of unnumbered admirers his example abides as a lesson and a power. This is his epitaph :

“The Lord was with Joseph,
And he was a prosperous man.”

XVIII. THE STANDARD.

(DECORATION DAY, 1894.)

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed because of the truth."—Ps. 60:4.

THERE is no spectacle connected with the late war which remains more beautiful in our memory, than the presentation of Colors to the Regiment, when about leaving home for the front. Who can forget the scene, that saw it more than a quarter of a century ago? the long lines of men fresh marshaled in warlike array, a steady wall of blue sparkling with fire, as uniforms and weapons shone in the sun! Then an official appears with a Standard in hand, representing the community or the government. To him steps forth the Head of the Battalion, and receives the sacred charge. With it goes the commission of the people and their rulers to honor and support this emblem of authority: and as the Colonel accepts the stately token, he thereby pledges himself and his command to regard it as the symbol of the cause to which they have devoted their services and their lives. Then roll of drums and sound of fife and bugle stream forth, while the long line comes to "present arms" in loyal salute of their new leadership. And so the Colors take their place in the center of the Regiment which henceforth is to guard them and follow them, to suffer and die for them —to the last man and the last gun.

In the light of the pathetic, heroic story since unrolled, of the devotion of those soldiers to their Standard and its meaning, that initial ceremony wears a religious aspect, as we now look back upon it. We see in it the first act of that piety of patriotism which led so many to a martyr's death at last. And our hearts burn with the hope that never will the sacred fire of that sacrificial spirit die out in our land, as long as there remains the relation of the citizen to the State. For we find in this high consecration the emblem of a still nobler Cause and its claims—even that which the text makes known—“Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed because of the truth.”

The Truth a Standard and the Christian a Standard-bearer. What is called the “Flag” today, has been in all ages the symbol of authority, but it has been of many forms and styles. In ancient times the Standard was often a portable object of metal or wood that could be carried aloft, as the Roman Eagle was displayed at the head of the legions. Most frequently the Standard has taken the form of a banner, whose color, shape or device has varied indefinitely. Our own flags are numerous in style and meaning. The National standard of stars and stripes was adopted by Congress in June, 1777, when a star and a stripe for each of the colonies was selected as its device. The first flag of this pattern was made at General Washington’s dictation by a woman—Betsy Ross of Philadelphia. The flag was first hoisted in actual warfare at the capture of Fort Stanwix, August 6, 1777—having been hastily put together out of fragments of cloth found in the camp. Since 1818, one star has been added to the field of blue for each new state, so that now our emblem con-

sists of forty-five stars and thirteen stripes. In addition to this flag, each state has its own banner, each regiment may have its particular ensign, and there is a great variety of flags used as signals in the navy.

But the Standard has always one meaning—it is the emblem of authority delegated from the government to its servants. By it the nation entrusts its honor to those who represent it. With the flag goes the good name of the power that commissions it. Who bears the Standard carries all that it involves. And how significant is this of the relation which Christianity expresses between God and the world! The divine government needs agents and servants here, for its authority has been resisted. Sin is rebellion, against which all the forces of heaven are now engaged. Christ the champion calls for volunteers to follow him in the Holy War. Enlisting them in his “Grand Army,” he invests them with the “whole armor of God,” that they may stand against the enemy as “good soldiers of Jesus Christ.” But the equipment of war is incomplete without a flag to serve as a leader, a rallying point, a radiating center, and this is provided for us.

The Cross of Christ is the christian standard, which the Captain of our salvation gives to them who fear him that it may be displayed because of the truth. As such we regard it; it is the emblem of the divine government, the pledge of the divine assistance, the exponent of the divine will. The cross expresses to us the purposes of grace toward the world. To it we look for inspiration and direction. In its name we have consecrated our service and our sacrifice; and around it are gathered our brightest hopes, our greatest joy, our noblest endeavor.

"God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

1. *Where the Standard is, its Author is.* In a foreign land you see above a building, or from the mast-head of a ship, the stars and stripes flying, and you know at once what that means. It signifies that in that house or on that ship you are on American soil. The United States government is there for the protection of its citizens. It is a principle of international law that "where the flag is the government is." Experience has shown that this is a necessary provision and one which may be practically carried out. Wars have been caused or have been prevented by this identity of interest between the standard and that which it represents. Even so it is in grace, where the person and work of Christ stand for the purpose and honor of the government of God. When the Father sent the Son into the world He invested Him with his own dignity. "This is my beloved Son—hear ye him." Jesus had therefore the right to say "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And all who have any dealings with the cross of Christ should remember that through it God is speaking to them, and according to their treatment of it will they be judged by Him.

2. *Where the Standard is, its Author displays his own character.* There are many flags and of many meanings. Universally the white flag is a token of peace. The red flag is a favorite symbol of bloody extremism. The yellow flag usually indicates the hospital. The black flag is the common sign of unsparing cruelty. National standards derive their character from the repute of the government which they represent. The red and yellow ensign

of Spain, once the most awe-inspiring in the world, is now far less imposing than the meteor flag of England, with its two crosses; and the tri-color of France no longer shines for the revolutionary spirit, as when it was first unfurled. The gorgeous banner of China, the green flag of Islam, have but little of the dignity which formerly invested them; while the stars and stripes, unknown a century ago, are now respected by the whole world. It is the nation that gives character to the flag. But how poor and pale are all earthly emblems compared with the glory of the divine standard! The cross of Christ represents the strongest government, the wisest authority, the most benign rule, the sweetest influence in the universe. It is the symbol of love, the pledge of peace, the gift of grace to men. Beneath its blessed shadow no harm can lurk, under its benediction all happiness abides.

3. *Where the Standard is, its Author is, to act and be acted upon.* The flag has more than a passive meaning—it is an active reality. Let a nation's flag be fired on, and the North springs to arms; for every shot against Sumter was aimed at the government. The English consul protected a refugee, by throwing over him the red banner of St. George, as effectually as with a broadside of cannon. In like manner is the Gospel the power of God and the wisdom of God. Who bears the cross carries the authority of the Most High. Whoever rejects it, insults the Almighty. There can be no greater dishonor to a nation than to trail its flag in the dust.

4. *The Standard has other practical uses.* It serves to lead the host, to show them their path and goal. The Admiral's flag signals to the fleet its course. Often in war it

is necessary for the colors to go to the front; as at Missionary Ridge, when the storming column wavered and fell back before the fire of the enemy, the Colonel of an Iowa regiment grasped the flag and held it firmly in advance of the line, until the men rallied and returned to the charge. So has God given a banner to them that fear Him, in order that it may be displayed for their guidance and encouragement. The cross of Christ is to us what the pillar of fire and cloud was to the hosts in the wilderness. In the battle with sin it is our "white plume of Navarre," to follow which is to find the path of victory.

The standard serves as a useful rallying point—a central authority, without which an army would often become a mere mob. It is sometimes of extraordinary sanctity—such as the holy ensign of the Moslems, of green silk, on which the name of "Allah" is brodered in gold 28,900 times, and which is never displayed in public except at times of extreme emergency. Under the old French empire, the last and greatest appeal to the nation was made when the Oriflamme, a golden scutcheon, was taken from its shrine in the cathedral; then all France was bound to respond to its call.

But none of these emblems is to be compared with that glorious sign which Constantine saw in his dream—a cross of light two miles in length, filling the sky with its splendor, while its motto burned above, "in this conquer." Then was the ancient Eagle displaced by the Labarum, which gave to Rome a new and greater empire. Even in the hand of error, the cross has proven to be the foremost badge of authority and emblem of prowess the world has ever seen.

The regimental flag is often inscribed with the names

of battles through which it has been borne. Soldiers take pride in those brave reminders of their own sacrifices in behalf of Fatherland. None of the regimental standards in the regular army, however, bear such inscriptions from the late war, for by act of Congress this was prohibited. It is to the immortal honor of Charles Sumner that this measure was passed, in order to free the standing army from anything which would keep alive in the service the remembrance of that terrible internecine strife. Nor is there need that the cross be inscribed with the names of its victories, countless as they are. There is no exultation in the heart of God over His conquered enemies. Rather are they all embraced within the arms of his paternal love.

Consider the Christian as a Standard-bearer. No flag can hoist itself or wave aloft, save as it is elevated by some hand and sustained by some power. Wherefore it is true in religious as in military affairs—"thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." The office of "color-sergeant" is a very great honor in the regiment, and the "color-guard" is a group of picked men, chosen for their good appearance and character, to serve as the guardians of the battalion's pride. They march with it, stand around it on parade, watch over it and defend it with their lives;—a noble trust, and nobly discharged, as a rule.

In like manner the cross of Christ needs some one to uphold and sustain and defend it. Truth has no voice except through our mouths—no hands or feet but those that we can furnish. Therefore the great Captain placed his standard in the care of his followers when he said "go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." And what an

honor!—to be entrusted by the Head of the Church with the truth which is the symbol of his authority and the highest product of his love! Every Christian should be a color-sergeant, and all of us should be a color-guard. This standard is to be “displayed.” Too often the soldiers of the cross keep their colors furled as though afraid to expose them. But a concealed truth is a powerless truth. Only as we assert the Gospel and carry it aloft like the Oriflamme, can we truly honor and serve it. God forbid that we should glory save in the cross! for when that emblem is truly displayed, it becomes the “power of God unto salvation.”

You remember that in the army each regiment had its own State colors and also its corps badge, as well as the National flag. How proud the soldiers were of that distinctive token, by which each corps had its own mark! —the First Corps, a circle; the Second, a trefoil; the Third, a diamond; the Fourth, a triangle; the Fifth, a Maltese cross; the Sixth, a Greek cross; the Seventh, star and crescent; Eighth, a star; Ninth, a shield; Tenth, a bastion redoubt; Eleventh, crescent; Twelfth, star; Thirteenth, oval; Fourteenth, acorn; Fifteenth, cartridge box; Sixteenth, cross; Seventeenth, arrow; and so on up to the Twenty-fifth. Each of those badges signified a separate and peculiar organization, but they were all subordinate to the one supreme authority of the National Standard. Even so it is with the church of Christ. It contains many distinct denominational elements, each of which bears its own emblem and does its own work in its peculiar way. But they are all under one allegiance—they serve one Master, and have no other supreme signal than his cross.

The standard must be defended. It is always the first object of attack. Nowhere else is the fire so hot in battle as where the colors are displayed. I remember once in action, our regiment could not see the enemy's line for the tall grass and shrubbery which intervened; but their red battle flag was clearly visible. After the engagement four brave Confederates were found dead on that spot, where they had fallen around their standard. And there they were buried reverently, with a soldier's pride in a gallant foe. For nothing less than that can satisfy the military ideal. The flag must be sheltered at any cost.

And should the Christian do less?—does not the cross deserve such devotion at our hands? It has received it in every age, since the time when Christ gave it to the church with his own pierced hand. And how many veterans have done and dared all for its sake!—how many martyrs and confessors have fallen around its sacred form! At the assault on Vicksburg the Color-sergeant of an Iowa regiment, holding up his banner, had both hands shot off, and then clasping it in his bleeding arms he held it still until he was prostrated in death—but the flag was firmly in his grasp even then. At the battle of Fredericksburg the Fifth New Hampshire were driven back with great slaughter from the enemy's line, leaving their flag with its bearer on the field. A captain going back to rescue it, was killed. Another officer on the same errand fell, and then another; then several privates met the same fate, their bodies lying around the standard where they fell; and it was not until the terrible breastwork thus formed furnished a protection from the enemy's fire, that under cover of it, the soldiers at last rescued their beloved standard and restored it to its place in the ranks. But that

is what any regiment would do for its standard, as long as it has the true military spirit. It is what an unknown multitude of Christians have done for the cross.

There are great compensations for the standard bearer. His very perils bring to him proportionate honors. There are no more gallant and glorious incidents of war than those that have clustered around the fortunes of the standard. What an honor came to Capt. Kautz when he hoisted the national flag over the City Hall of New Orleans, and to Major Stearns, of the Fourth Massachusetts Cavalry, who was the first to unfurl the stars and stripes over Richmond! It is claimed that the colors of the Ninety-ninth Illinois Volunteers led all others in the capitulation of Vicksburg, those of the Seventy-third Indiana were the foremost at the storming of Mission Ridge, and those of the Twelfth West Virginia were in the lead at the capture of Fort Gregg, Petersburg. These claims have been disputed by other regiments, I believe, for there is nothing that soldiers crave more highly than precedence for their flag in battle. But all the glory of triumph centers in the standard and those who bear it.

So it will be with the final triumph of the cross. God himself hath promised that his dear Son shall finally see all enemies put under his feet. His name is to be above every name, and his cross is to shine forth supremely as the sign of universal conquest. But that triumph will be shared by the standard-bearers also. When Christ our life shall be manifested, then shall we also be manifested in glory with him. Every one who has served or suffered for the great salvation, will have a part in its final glory. "Ye are they who continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom." Think

you that any one then will regret that he "was crucified with Christ" in the self-denials and sacrifices of the faith?

Perhaps the most romantic instance of compensation in the late war, took place when Col. Anderson raised again over Fort Sumter the same flag which he had been compelled to lower on that spot four years before. On April 14, 1861, he with his few men were forced to submit to their enemies, who saw the stars and stripes go down before their superior numbers: and on April 14, 1865, he with a large assembly of representative men from the North, restored the national banner to its place over the battle-scarred walls of the redeemed fortress, in token of the reestablishment of the national authority. But even this exhibition of poetic justice has been surpassed by the fact that all through the Southern States, the national emblem has received the voluntary and cordial reverence of confederate soldiers. On the battle-fields of the war the gray and the blue have vied in expressions of loyalty to the flag, and if ever its honor were endangered again, its foremost defenders would come from the ranks of those who once opposed it.

This is a picture of the final triumph of the truth which all men are yet to behold. They will see this very earth, so long the arena of strife and the victim of evil, restored to the domain of good. They will see the nature of man, which has been despoiled by sin, renewed and sanctified unto holiness. They will see the cross of shame become a crown of glory, as where sin abounded, grace will much more abound. But these final results are not yet visible. Here and now the great campaign is still in progress—the battles are being waged, and the soldier's work is not yet over.

The march and bivouac, the attack and defence, the weariness and painfulness, the exposure and endurance, wounds and death, are still the price to be paid for the great ends of war. The Standard is waving in the red front of contest. The standard-bearers are struggling and falling at its side. The great Captain calls for recruits to fill his wasted ranks. The Grand Army of the Gospel needs reinforcements. Hear the call for volunteers!

“The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain:
His blood-red banner streams afar:
Who follows in his train?”

It is a perilous service, but a good and gallant one. Self-denial is the badge of the christian soldier, but his example and inspiration is the cross, which represents the sacrifice of his Leader. Who could refuse to go where Christ has gone before? Our Captain is always in advance, showing the way.

When we enlisted in the sixties at our country's call, did we expect to join a holiday procession?—did we leave home and friends and comfort and safety for a military parade?—or was it with a stern sense of sacrifice that we followed our colors to the front? No need to say. Every man who donned the blue did so with a consecration that involved life and death in its unreserved engagement. But what nobler end, what grander destiny for the patriot than to find in his country's salvation his own monument! Even so for the good soldier of Jesus Christ! He can look forward to no more welcome and illustrious fortune, than to share the warfare of the cross and to blend his death with its life. For “this is a faithful saying—if we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him, if we suffer we shall also reign with Him.”

What becomes of the Standard? After the parade, the march, the battle, the long campaign, when the victory is won, and the war is over, where shall we look for the old battle-flags, and what would we see when we found them? In many of the states of the restored Union, all of the regimental colors borne by their troops in the war, have been collected at the Capitols, and carefully enshrined for lasting preservation and public exhibition. There they stand now, their warfare accomplished, to abide in peace for the future. But what a contrast between their present and their original condition! All torn and blackened, tattered and rent, in some cases mere shreds clinging to the staff, who would recognize them as the same that went, all shining and splendid in their first brave array, to the war? Nevertheless that ill-condition is their glory in our sight. Those scars are the same stern autographs of battle, testifying to their claims on immortality.

The story of one of these gallant remnants well deserves to be preserved by history. In the State House at Columbus is preserved the torn and soiled fragment of the colors of the Forty-eighth Ohio Volunteers. That regiment was captured in the Red River campaign, and marched to a prison in Texas. But when the soldiers surrendered their arms and ammunition, they kept their flag. Torn from its staff it was concealed in a haversack, and in the prison was buried in the earth under one of the huts. There it was guarded as carefully as a sacred relic, lest the jailers should suspect its existence. Sometimes at night, the suffering captives would creep through the darkness to beg for a touch of the "Old Glory," which seemed to help them to endure their misery. After a time the guards heard of it and made every effort to dis-

cover it, but in vain. One of the officers wrapped it around his body under his shirt, and so carried it until, after many months, the regiment was exchanged. Then as soon as they were free again, its guardian took the precious emblem from its hiding place and waved it in the air, while all the men hailed it with cheer and shouts and tears and rapture—their own old Standard delivered from captivity once more, to be their pride and leader. Such are the meanings of those rents and stains which apparently deface the standard: they are in the eyes of patriotism, picturesque history, romantic and tragic with the highest virtues of military experience. This is indeed the true glory of the Standard—not to shine with the lustre of untried resolution, but to show the solemn fruits of action and to tell of duty done.

So should Christian life find its crown, in the scars and the proofs of honorable warfare for the right. In far eternities to come, the battle-worn cross of our fealty to Christ will be enshrined in the highest honors of heaven—there to abide forever as a memorial that our banner was “displayed because of the truth.”

XIX. DIVINE ARCHITECTURE.

"Ye are God's building."—I COR. 3:9.

AN architect's profession is one of peculiar prominence and importance. The work of an artist, a sculptor, an author may be of a private character, known to only a few, or confined to a certain class of people and for a time. But an architect's productions are seen of all men—at least where they stand,—and they endure for long. The building which he designs and erects is the common property of the public and may continue so for generations.

As such his work has a general mission for good or ill. An ill-planned, poorly executed structure offers an offense to every passer-by. We may not see the picture or the statue which adorns some gallery, and we need not read the book which is offered for sale. But we cannot avoid the building which greets us every day; nor can we escape from its influence on our feelings, perhaps our character. You have observed edifices that were to you a perpetual affront and injury. They seemed like solidified vulgarity or materialized vanity, or embodied hypocrisy. You were consciously the worse for looking at them. At other times—how different! Who has not felt the purifying, elevating effect of a graceful stately structure? It rises before the eye a psalm of praise, a prayer of aspiration. Or it stands grandly firm like Truth or Justice in

terms of matter. Or in the appropriate forms of home use, it is an incarnation of domestic virtue. We are always the better for looking at such things, whether we know it or not. They line our streets with noble influences. They are to the public eye preachers of righteousness whose ministry may not be recognized, and yet is real and good. And therefore we hold that the profession of an architect is one of peculiar importance. Few other vocations have such a scope of public utility and of permanent influence. It is true that the thinker, the author sometimes attains to an immortality which no one else can reach. But of all human productions how few will outlast the Pyramids or the Parthenon!—how few have enjoyed the popularity of the Grecian pillar, the Roman arch, or the Gothic spire?

Let then this most useful and responsible office give us a point of view from which to consider some of the works of God. For He is the original and supreme Architect from whom all human art is derived. What is ou-science and philosophy but a thinking of the thoughts of God after him? Let Art reverently recognize this and never forget its debt to Him who laid the foundations of the earth with rocky firmness, and paved its surface with flowery mosaic; reared its lofty columns of mountain lines festooned with the blue draperies of distance, and arched over all the dome of space, frescoed with clouds and stars. So hath he built the world as a Temple for his worship, and filled it with his praise, from where the priestly morning offers his red sacrifice upon the sea, to where from minarets of western clouds the sunset calls to prayer.

He that built all things is God; but we are now concerned with a particular branch of the divine industry—

"ye are God's building." It is to the Divine Architecture of life that we shall confine our attention. We may notice certain general principles which are always observed by true art in its productions. All buildings which are what they ought to be, will be found to be constructed in accordance with the laws of utility, sincerity, stability and beauty. These are four of the "lamps of architecture"—Use, Truth, Strength, Beauty. Let us see how they illuminate the building of God as well as of men.

I. *Utility* is the starting point of all true construction. The first question which an architect asks with regard to a proposed structure is—What is it for? What end is it designed to serve? It is taken for granted that every building enterprise has an intelligent purpose to fulfill, and it is known that this purpose will determine all the questions respecting the size, shape, material, appearance of the proposed edifice. The one true standard of judgment is—adaptation to a proposed end. For this reason we shape our plans differently for various occasions. No one would construct a home as he would a store, or plan a barn like a workshop. Nor do we judge all things by any one rule. What would be appropriate for a college, would be unsightly in a factory. This is sometimes forgotten by critics who do not stop to inquire for the reason back of the appearance, before deciding as to its merits. But a massive structure, severely plain, would be commendable in a prison, while a graceful attractive edifice would be utterly inartistic for such a purpose. Adaptation to use is the first principle of true art.

Church architecture has suffered greatly from a disregard of this. When the original reign of Puritanic simplicity, which our fathers brought to this country, had run

its course, and Protestantism began to feel the influence of aestheticism, Christians seemed to go from one extreme to its opposite. As a reaction from the severe plainness of the old meeting house, there came to pass a lavish indulgence in Grecian style; and the land saw those pillared fronts surmounted by a tapering steeple, which would have dismayed the heart of a Doric or Ionic builder with their queer mixture. After the revival of mediævalism by Pugin of England, and its introduction to this country by Upjohn of New York, an epidemic of Gothic architecture spread rapidly through the country. This was not wholly objectionable, for this latest born and noblest of the great orders has furnished us with exteriors of peculiar nobility and grace. No other style is so expressive in its general contours of the aspiring and elevating tendency of religion; and it may be so modified as to be well adapted to all the uses of a christian sanctuary. But in some cases it has given us cathedral interiors of dim religious light, obstructive pillars and echoing vaults, which are wholly unsuited to our system of church service.

What does the non-liturgical service ask for in a sanctuary? It is not the space for spectacular display and dramatic effect which ritualism requires. We need an auditorium—a proper place for speaking and hearing divine truth. For us therefore true Art, which means refined utility, prescribes in a church edifice suitable means for popular gatherings, for common prayer and praise; and whatever in the way of arrangement and ornamentation interferes with these results, is not truly artistic. This does not exclude the choicest service of Art, but rather includes it, under the dictation of utility.

Now apply this principle to the work of the divine

Architect. When God is engaged in human life the first question for us to ask with respect to it is: What end has he in view? And the answer to this question will furnish the true criterion of its character: e. g., the Bible. No one should criticize the Scriptures until he has ascertained the object of their Author. This is given in his own words: "Every scripture inspired of God, is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely, unto every good work." This then is the divine purpose of the Bible, and by this standard it should be judged. It was not given to the world to be a scientific description of the universe, or a complete history of the past, or a manual of instruction on all ethical subjects. That is not what this building is for. It was erected to serve as a school of spiritual culture—an asylum of moral refuge—a home of religious growth—a temple of divine communion. Looked at in these aspects the Bible is absolutely faultless. It stands the test of utility to perfection.

Again, what is Christianity for? Let its Founder answer. "I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly:"—this is the purpose and province of his religion on earth, to communicate to men the life of God and develop in them his likeness. Let then the church of Christ be judged by this rule: does it make men god-like in character and conduct? It was never intended to make of them scholars, artists, philosophers, wealthy or famous people; and it should not be condemned because believers do not always realize those ideals. This building was intended for a "habitation of God through the Spirit," and it will be found that the

church of the New Testament answers that purpose exactly. We might go on in this manner and find that all christian life and history testify to the wisdom and skill of the Divine Architect. Whatever he has wrought or is working in this world, is sure to be perfectly adapted to the end which he has in view. All of the apparent defects or failures which we notice, are largely due to our own erroneous standards of judgment. Seen from heaven's point of view, all is appropriate and successful in the works of his hand.

2. Another principle of true architecture is *Sincerity*. This is the lamp of Truth which is one of the seven great lights by which Ruskin insists that all builders should be guided. The idea is that of exact conformity between reality and appearance. Let every edifice appear to be just what it really is. Beware of the false appearances which mislead the eye. If a building is a cheap structure, let it look so—at least let it not pass itself off for a costly one. If it is for a temporary purpose let it not assume the air of permanence. That there is need for such admonition, no one requires to be told. We have only to look around us and see that unfounded pretentiousness is a popular habit; it is indeed our typical national trait.

An effort to appear to be, rather than to be, a sacrifice of substance to show, meets the observer at every turn. With paint and veneer we make common woods look like costly material. Our cities are filled with palaces of pine, stone fronts with sides of brick, carved pillars of cast iron, elaborate cornices of pressed metal. All of which is simply architectural untruthfulness; it is dissimulation solidified—made public and permanent. There were observers at the World's Fair who felt, if they did not

utter, this criticism on that bright and beautiful display. The White City could not bear close inspection. It was nothing but lath and plaster after all. And although its purpose was that of temporary effect, and judgment should take this into the account, still there was a certain suggestiveness about all those stuccoed grandeur and painted beauties. They were so indicative of much of American life—its hasty triumphs, its hollow accomplishments, its brave show and brief endurance. One of the good signs of the times is the tendency of the public taste toward simplicity and sincerity of style. The new school of architecture is teaching the superior beauty of truthfulness in building. The reign of Mansard and Queen Anne is passing away, and we are learning that as an honest man is the noblest work of God, so an honest house is the best work of man.

Now if we apply this test to the Divine Architecture we shall find no room for adverse criticism. If there is one feature of the Almighty's handiwork more salient than another, it is that of absolute sincerity. The Creator is the God of Truth and not a shadow of deceptiveness has ever dimmed the white light of the Sun of Righteousness. God is not a man that he should lie. He is a rock, his way is perfect, just and right is he. This is the testimony of nature to the great Builder. The sidereal universe regarded as a structure is faultless in plan and execution. What is human science in its most elaborate exactness, but a finite reflection of and tribute to the absolute rectitude of creation? We are taught by experience that nothing but truthfulness will unlock the mysteries of nature. The slightest deviation from accuracy throws one off the line of discovery.

So it is in Grace. In the moral universe God insists that men shall be like himself. He desireth truth in the inward parts. They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Nothing is more offensive to the Most High than pretence. God abhors the sacrifice where not the heart is found. And the commandments of the Bible are in the same line. "Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile." "Speak every man truth with his neighbor." "Let love be without dissimulation." "Provide things honest in the sight of all men." These are the plans and specifications for the builders of character. The Architect who inspires and directs the process of life, insists that life be what it appears to be. He tolerates no sham work, accepts no surface show. The one human fault for which Jesus had no mercy was hypocrisy. He could bear with all other kinds of human infirmity, but the "whited sepulchre;" the platter cleaned on the outside, was beyond the pale of his endurance. "To be seen of men" was the blackest stigma ever affixed by him on the sinner. What then would he say if he were to walk again the streets of Jerusalem and look upon life as it is lived today? If we find so much of duplicity in character and in society, what would he see there? Perhaps there is no one fault, not to say vice, more common at present and more easily condoned, than that of maintaining false appearances. We are so used to it that our language can hardly provide descriptive terms for all the grades and shades and qualities of deceptiveness. Who could exhaust the vocabulary of falsehood? We can find no end to the possibilities and range of falsehood—the world is full of untruth. How then must it appear in the sight of Him who is the absolute veracity? Not one

of us would dare to let our real motives and aims be always exposed to the public. Ah no. We build fair-seeming fronts, to hide the interiors where we live. And so men walk along the avenues of time, looking on the stately structures that line the way with ornate reputations, labeled each with a good name, and all the time they wonder what is going on behind them in the secret chambers of character.

But are we not told that a time of test and disclosure is coming when there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known? The God of truth will not endure this reign of falseness forever. All of the duplicities of time are to be swept away by the breath of his mouth, and nothing will be left save that which is real. What we are will then be shown by what we seem to be. "He that is filthy let him be filthy still; he that is righteous let him be righteous still." It is the part of wisdom to learn that lesson now. In all the constructions of life let us practice sincerity. "Live thy creed, be what thou seemest."

"In the elder days of art
Workmen wrought with nicest care,
Each minute and hidden part,
For the gods see everywhere."

That is what Christianity insists upon. For "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

3. Another of the lamps of architecture is *Stability*. The quality of endurance is of the first importance. Whether a building is large or small, costly or cheap, tasteful or otherwise, it must at least be able to stand. Permanence is indeed a relative term. As applied to structures it is always conditioned by their purpose. Every building should be able to fulfill its own plan, en-

dure as long as it is needed. We do not look for the stability in a school house which may be demanded of a fortress. But whatever the meaning and end of a building, it should be strong enough to realize that. But is there any principle of architecture which is more frequently violated in this land and age than the principle of stability? The first impression made on foreigners on arriving here is that of the weak and perishable character of our edifices; so many of wood and of a flimsy construction! In the old world the experience of ages has compelled the people to use the strongest material; houses are expected to last for generations. But in the new world we have hardly outgrown the hasty habits of the pioneers, and the result is such an awful fact as this: during one year the losses by fire were sometimes at the rate of \$450,000 a day, (\$312 a minute through the year). I can hardly believe this, but it is said to be the report of the insurance companies. And we may be prepared to understand it when we consider the nature of the edifices that often fill our crowded cities, and the careless habits of their occupants.

But is there not a parallelism between the building and the builder also? Look at life as it is lived by us and by others, and what is more evident than the improvident habit of caring only for the present? A man builds a house of the poorest stuff internally, expending most of his labor on the outside; "it is only built to sell," he explains. Another constructs a residence for his own use, but in a very imperfect manner; "it will last my time, it is good enough for now," he exclaims, when its faults are pointed out. This is the typical American style—living by the day and letting to-morrow take care of itself. But

what poor economy!—how wasteful and ruinous in the long run! The worst of it is the reflex influence on moral character. What we do and make is both the effect and the cause of what we are. They who are satisfied with the temporary and imperfect in material affairs, are apt to be as careless with respect to spiritual interests.

One of the most serious obstructions to Christianity is this habit of false content—caring for the present to the neglect of the future. Men build for themselves mere shells of moral habitation, having the form of godliness but denying the power. Hear then the word of the Lord: “Every man’s work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire and the fire shall prove each man’s work of what sort it is.” The central quality of God’s handiwork is strength. It has the power of endurance. It stands every test, braves every storm, defies all kinds of trial. Christianity offers a firm basis for building, in the first place, in Him who is the stone, the tried stone, the sure foundation, and they who build on him shall never be moved. It also supplies indestructible material in that righteousness of Christ, which has already been tried in the fire and has survived the extremest test. It also secures for life the supervision of an architect who is at once the power of God and the wisdom of God. Nothing which he constructs can possibly perish. Firm as his throne his promise stands, and he can well secure what we’ve committed to his hands till the decisive hour. The strength of the pyramids will fail at length, and not a trace be left of the entombed beauty of Greece and the monumental pride of Rome. Yea, the hills shall depart and the mountains be removed, the sun and stars may fade and the heavens be rolled together like a scroll: but thy

throne, O God, is forever and ever, and they that put their trust in thee shall never be confounded.

4. The final grace of architecture is *Beauty*. It is not the first or the chief element to be considered, but it is the last and crowning quality. Of course every one desires that a building should look well, be a delight to the eye when finished. But a wise architect will tell you that in order that an edifice should appear to be good, it must first be good. And he will explain the difference between constructive ornament and ornamental construction. In the one case decoration is an end in itself, in the other it is a means to an end. This is a test by which we may distinguish between the false and the true in architecture; some styles are merely designed for effect and everything is sacrificed to appearance. Others aim at utility first, and display secondarily. Good taste always prefers the latter. How soon we detect the imposture of stucco and veneer, of metal mouldings and sham fronts; and we despise them in spite of their gaudy show! While some plainer building, that makes no pretence, is yet so evidently sound and sensible, so honest in its construction and appropriate in its design, that we gaze on it with ever-increasing pleasure.

What, then, is beauty in architecture? It is not a matter of external decoration alone. It can not be secured by merely plastering on pretty features, or piling up rich embellishments. It is rather the finial grace of such inherent qualities as use, truth and strength. It is therefore a variable quality. What is beautiful in one case may not be in another. It is a mistake to put a Doric front on a small dwelling, or a sculptured facade on a row of stores. No amount of florid finish can make a jail look

beautiful ; and good taste objects to seeing railroad cars and steamboats bedizened with excessive decoration. Adaptation to use, appropriateness to occasion, is the artistic condition of true beauty. Grecian architecture remains the supreme standard of this attribute, for the reason that simplicity and sincerity were the Greek ideal of beauty. No excess, no falsity, no straining for effect was ever visible on the many colored fanes, whose perfect pillared pride gleamed seaward from the classics hills of Hellas.

Let us apply this lamp of architecture to the illumination of life. We see at once that it is recognized by him who is the Master-builder of all. No one can observe the works of God without being impressed by their beauty. From the exquisite carving on the shells of animalculae too minute for the unaided eye to see, to the stately lines of mountains sloping along the horizon ; from the rich coloring of the flower and the autumn leaf, to the sheen of morning and sunset skies ; from the grace of the bird to the loveliness of woman, the creation shines at every point with the Creator's conception of beauty.

But the closest inspection always reveals that this is not a matter of superficial ornamentation, but the outward expression of internal character. What the Creator asks for and is ever striving to produce in his creatures, is not the appearance of beauty, but the causes and conditions of it. What are they ? Look at him who realized the divine ideal of life, who was the effulgence of the Father's glory. Did he live a life of elegant ease or graceful accomplishment ? Was he one of the "ornaments of society?" Anything but that. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ; his visage was so marred more

than any man's, and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him. Thus he appeared to the eye of sense, according to the standard of earthly effect. But to the spiritual eye, Jesus was the chiefest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely, for his was the charm of purity, power and love. He cared nothing for appearances. He aimed at no dramatic effect. He never posed. There was none of the statuesque parade of conscious heroism about that humble life of sacrifice and devotion. Yet such was the moral excellence of his character and the usefulness of his life, that his name has been shining on the world ever since as the brightest star in history. Painters never tire of depicting his face, sculptors are ever reproducing his form, poets are praising and philosophers are studying his nature, because of the superior beauty of what he was and did.

Here then is the model for all builders of life. This is the realization of the divine ideal. It shows us what true beauty is and how it may be secured. To be beautiful is the privilege, it is the duty of every one. No life is complete without this finial grace. Every one should desire to exert on others the winsome charm, the delightful effect of loveliness. And beauty of face, figure, character or life, is within the reach of every one. But we must always remember that true beauty is not an end in itself. It is never reached by those who seek it for its own sake. Like happiness, it is reached indirectly; it is incidental to other things. Be beautiful, if you would appear so. Provide the conditions of beauty in purity, truth and usefulness. Live sweetly and graciously. Forget self, and be good and do good toward others. Then beauty will come of itself, like a flower that blooms un-

helped on the stalk. It is one of the Creator's most precious gifts if sought and won as he bestows it. "Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary" but it is the "beauty of holiness." And the word of the Lord is "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just and pure and lovely, if there be any virtue or any praise, think on these things." So shall the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; we shall behold the beauty of the Lord, and inquire in his temple here, until at last we look upon the King in his beauty and see the land that is very far off.

XX.

THE PALM AND THE CEDAR.

"The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."—Ps. 92:12.

PALESTINE is a land of contrasts. Perhaps no portion of the earth's surface of so limited an area (about as large as the state of New Hampshire), contains within its borders such an association of extremes. Bordered on the west by the great Mediterranean, it is bounded on the east by vast deserts. In the south the deepest depression of the world holds the bitter waters of the Dead Sea, and on the north the towering heights of Hermon shine, capped with snow. Along the valley of the Jordan the fruits and flowers of the tropics abound, while on the uplands not far away the cereals of the temperate zone are growing. In one day the traveler may pass from the burning heat of desert sands, to the cool climes of northern mountains. It would seem that as its geographical position is at the center of the eastern hemisphere, so its physical features present a meeting point of the antipodes. This cosmopolitan character prepared Palestine to be the home and school of a race destined to a universal mission; for through them was to be given to mankind a religion adapted to all zones and countries. There and thus was born the Bible, a book stored with illustrations and forms of divine truth, so varied and inexhaustible as to reach every race and climate and condition with equal effect.

The Book was shaped and colored by the Land. No one can appreciate the endless adaptability of the Scriptures to all kinds and conditions of human life, who does not take into account the physical geography, the climate and productions of the Holy Land. Probably nowhere else on the face of the globe could topography have been so useful to the service of divine truth.

Our text is an illustration in point. "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree ; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Here we have one of the great contrasts of the vegetable world—the palm and the cedar. They stand at the opposite extremes of the family of trees. The palm belongs to the endogenous class of plants—those which grow from within ; the cedar to the exogenous class, those growing from without. The former class embraces a limited number of plants, such as the lilies, grasses, orchids, banana, etc., of which the largest are found only in the tropics. The latter class includes the vast race of the "coniferae," the pines, the hemlock, spruce and fir that cover the cold regions of the north. In Palestine the palm thrives in the valleys, the cedar loves the mountains and the rocks. They are never found together, for in habit, quality and needs they are entirely distinct. How different also in appearance ! The palm consists of one slender column, crowned with a graceful tuft of leaves : the cedar has a broad-based trunk which ramifies into a huge canopy of radiating boughs. The palm has valuable fruit, but yields little timber for building purposes : the cedar has no fruit, but supplies the builder with very valuable material. The palm tree stands alone usually, preferring isolation—even when in groves its companies do not seem like a forest : the cedar is companiona-

ble in its habits, loving the dark woodlands that cover the mountain side with green and stately society. Thus these noble products of the earth seem to have little in common. They might be taken as types of human dissimilarity, even discord. What is true of the one can not be true of the other. And yet not so. There is a service which they can both render to the same object—they may be regarded as emblems of true religion. “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.” These trees may be taken as illustrations of the contrasts and harmonies of christian experience.

I. The first truth suggested by this comparison is that of the *universality* of the *Christian religion*. Christianity is the religion of the palm and the pine. Its area embraces the entire range of life in this world. The palm as the symbol of the tropics, and the pine as the emblem of the arctic zone, are the two extremes of vegetation, but they are both under the shadow of the Cross. The contrast so clearly marked by Heine, the German poet, is equally suggestive in the realm of faith :

“A pine tree standeth lonely
On a far norland height:
It slumbereth, and around it
The snows fall thick and white.
And of a palm it dreameth,
Which in a southern land
Silent and lonely standeth,
Amid the burning sand.”

Of no other religion could such a contrast be used in illustration of its vast and varied scope. Every one of the faiths that have flourished out of the soil of humanity has had its distinct and limited habitat, and as a rule they

have been confined to the zone of their birthplace. Buddhism, the mystic palm tree of the South, has never thriven in the colder latitudes. The pine tree of dark and stern Scandinavian mythology refuses to cross the hot parallels. Mohammedanism will not bear transplanting beyond the sub-tropical zone, and European rationalism is never anything but a frail exotic in Asia. But this can not be said of the Gospel. It knows no limitations. Born as it was in the far South, it has achieved its greatest conquests in the far North. Starting in the Orient, it has followed the sun around the world, as much at home in England as the sunshine itself. This is not an accident of history but the purpose of its Founder. For God so loved the world as to give His Son to save all who would believe; and the Savior sent forth his disciples into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature.

Christianity is a catholic faith, all embracing and satisfying. It is an exclusive religion, acknowledging no peer and fearing no rival. From the palm to the pine it stretches the scope of its claims and dominions. Humanity is its parish: the world is its home: time is its life. Was there ever so cosmopolitan a book as the Bible? Oriental in its origin, tropical in its style, it has transcended all the bounds of climate and land in its reach. It is more popular in the north than in the south, in the west than in the east, among the Gentiles than among the Jews. Of what other book can this be said? The Koran, the Vedas, the Zend Avesta, the Eddas, the Five Kings of Confucius confine themselves each to the land and race of their birth—or if they go beyond it, they refuse to be translated. If translated, they lose their individuality. The Christian Scriptures always insist on translation—they bear it—they

flourish anew in their new form : so that now in more than 300 distinct modes of human speech, divine revelation is uttering its voice. The Gospel loses nothing by such transplanting. From the palm to the pine, it flourishes in every soil. From Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand, the Bible seems as it were indigenous to all zones, climates and conditions.

But the secret of this universal adaptability remains to be told. It is found in the character of Him who is the heart of the Bible and its life. Jesus Christ is the Universal Man. He is independent of all ethnology. Born a Jew, living and dying a Hebrew of the Hebrews, he at once rose above the limitations of race, and has ever since been known to the whole world as the God of Humanity. Of no other leader can this be said. It takes a Chinaman to appreciate Confucius. No one but a Hindoo can understand Buddha, and the Arab alone can sympathize with Mohammed. But Jesus of Nazareth is "the man without a country." No one thinks of him as a Jew. Every country that knows him claims him for its own. The cold criticism of England vies with the philosophic skepticism of Germany and the sentimental rhetoric of France, to admire him ; and Mozoomdar, a Hindoo scholar, publishes a book on "the Oriental Christ" to show that Jesus of Nazareth belongs chiefly to the East. Thus has he been shown to be the "desire of all nations." The same principle holds in religion as a personal experience. Christianity embraces all the varieties of individual character and condition. It is not a poor man's religion, nor a rich man's, distinctively. It does not belong to the wise or to the foolish, the rich or the poor, exclusively. It is equally applicable to the philosopher and the child,

and is enjoyable by the master and servant alike. The Bible shows us divine grace bestowed, impartially and yet with a separateness of adjustment also, on Abraham the noble sheik, and on Jacob the poor outcast; on Solomon the monarch, and Elijah the hermit; on Saul the Pharisee, and Simon the fisherman. So it is now. The Gospel exhibits no respect of persons. It flourishes alike with the cedar on the mountains and the palm in the valleys. Gustavus Adolphus the soldier, Newton the scientist, Milton the poet, McCosh the philosopher, Gladstone the statesman, Dodge the merchant, Frances Willard the reformer, are specimens of the diversity of gifts with which spirituality may coexist in the service of God and man. No limit has been found to this adaptability. The only barrier which Christianity cannot surmount is unbelief. But given openness of heart and readiness of life, and the gospel can flourish anywhere. It is a tree which bears fruit as freely in winter as in summer—it is indigenous to Tropics and Arctics alike—it is a pine on the highlands of exposure, and a palm in the valleys of security. For it is the gift of One whose eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good, and who is not far from every one of us.

2. Let us consider the *varieties and diversities* which are found within this universality. True religion always takes form and color from the life with which it deals. As in nature there are no repetitions, but with all the uniformities of matter and force, a perpetual changefulness of method and result obtains, issuing in the charming kaleidoscopic effects that we enjoy so much, a similar process is observable in grace. The same Word of the Lord came to Moses and Joshua, but how different the effect

produced—on the lawgiver and the soldier! The disciples of Jesus were all baptized by one Spirit into one body; but how various were the functions of Peter, and John! how different the endowments and mission of Paul and James! This diversity of operations by one and the self-same Spirit is manifest at all times; as our text indicates, “the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.”

Look at the *Palm-Christian*. The tree which is the pride of the Tropics has certain peculiarities which are typical of religious traits. The palm is unlike most other trees in its method of growth—it expands from within, each season's increase being an internal accretion, not an external addition as in exogenous plants. It is also peculiar in having no branches, save a plume-like tuft of leaves six or eight feet long at its crown. It rises as a slender column without side issues. It flourishes best where few other trees can thrive, in the heat and sand of the Torrid zone. It has the power of searching for and finding the hidden stores of liquid in the ground. It also reserves its utility for the top, bearing clusters of fruit at the base of its coronal of leaves. But this strange and lonely tree, so peculiar and unlike all others, is almost the entire vegetable support of some of the regions where it grows. There are parts of Africa and Asia where the people literally subsist on the palm tree. They find in its fruit food for man and beast; in its leaves material for couches, baskets, rugs and hats; in its stalks the means of making fences and roofs; in its fibre the stuff for threads and ropes. Out of its sap they extract oil, honey and wine, and its trunk is used for timber and fuel. The bamboo is the only other plant which compares with the palm for

general utility. The Arabs enumerate 360 distinct uses of their beloved tree. No wonder the son of the desert loves it !

“ To him the palm is a gift divine,
Wherein all uses of man combine,
Home and raiment and food and wine.

And in the hour of his great release,
His need of the palm shall only cease
With the shroud wherein he lieth in peace.”

The analogy between these features of vegetable life and certain phases of religious experience, is very striking. The Palm-Christian is one whose piety seems to be peculiarly independent of circumstances. It flourishes in the midst of adverse conditions. He stands alone perhaps in an evil generation. We wonder how such spirituality can be sustained amid the sandy wastes, until we learn that its life is “ hid with Christ in God.” The Palm-Christian is much devoted to private prayer, scripture study and devout meditation. He abides in Christ and Christ in him. His growth is endogenous—from within, not always apparent externally. Therefore his experience may be subjective in its phases, introspective in its tendencies. Such Christians are often unappreciated by others because of this withdrawn and secret habit. But their piety is self-reliant and self-sustained, in the best sense of the terms. The Palm-Christian is always the same, whatever the change of his circumstances. In the church or the world, at home and abroad, on Sunday and on week days, amid friends or foes he is “ like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

This species of religious life is also characterized by

singleness and elevation of tendency. As the palm tree mounts straight upward, without one lateral branch, from the ground to the skies, so does personal piety often devote itself to heavenly ends alone. It has no side issues of earthly affiliation. It wastes no time with things of this world, but sets its affection on things above. It is ever seeking those things, where Christ is—seated at the right hand of God. We have seen such a life—in Christian poets whose muse soars like a lark, and ever soaring sings; in Christian thinkers who were like astronomers searching the heavens for starry truths; in Christian aspirants whose whole being seemed absorbed in celestial contemplation. Like a palm tree such a character stands, a simple column of lone individuality, a reserved and silent life perhaps that does not freely express itself and is often misunderstood :

“ Type of the wise who soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home.”

Such a religion has been called mystical, transcendental. But it has its place in the moral arboretum. It embodies one type of Grace, as the palm one type of Nature. It realizes the ideal of Him who was often alone among men, yet not alone for the Father was with him. It shows forth the apostolic faith, “for me to live is Christ.”

Again, the Palm Christian is as useful as he may be peculiar. However unworldly his religion, it is not unpractical or fruitless. Like its botanical analogue it fills an important place. The self-contained, self-supporting life of spiritual Christianity peoples waste regions where nothing else would grow. It is Lot in Sodom, Daniel in Babylon, Paul in Rome, and numberless other palm trees of God who in all ages have peopled the desert with life. Here

and now how much does society owe to the separate lives of lonely righteousness that bear witness to the truth in the midst of evil and error! The palm decorates the landscape. It is the most graceful of trees, dear to the artist's eye, with its slender vertical line crowned with aerial curves, like the jet of a fountain and its falling spray. Even so does heavenly mindedness beautify the moral world. There is a nameless charm in the pure ambition, the celestial aim of a godly life. It ornaments the scenery of time with the ethereal grace of eternity. How often have the tired pilgrims of society been glad to rest in the shade of Christian character, and find in its unworldly peace what the Israelites enjoyed beneath the palm trees, by the wells in the desert! Nor this alone. Spirituality bears fruit, practical and precious. As the palm holds out no branches, but reserves its strength for the cluster of dates high up at the base of its leaves, so will the most elevated and abstract religion contribute much to the uses of the world. The peaceable fruits of righteousness are many and good. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. It will be found that these virtues are as applicable to the practical needs of life, and are as capable of sustaining all of its industries, as the tree of the desert can keep alive a region and a race with its versatile usefulness.

Lastly, consider the *Cedar-Christian*. The righteous shall not only flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. This tree is at the opposite arboreal extreme from the former. In appearance, structure, habitat, usefulness, the two are far apart: and yet they belong to the same divine economy in nature and in grace. The cedar is a member of the great family of conifers or

cone-bearing trees. Of this family the pine is the most common member, but the fir, the spruce, the larch are also abundant. It is the most widely diffused kind of tree in the world, being found on the mountains of all zones. It is also the most ancient of existing types: for the conifers flourished in the carboniferous forests, whose remains form our coal beds. No other trees are so generally useful to the human race. No others are so widely admired and so highly prized. They are found under the gray skies of the frigid and on the lifted heights of the torrid zone; and their stately forests, so calm and dim with noble colonnades of stately trunks and spreading boughs, are beautiful in summer heats, and grand with unfading green amid the winter snows. The pine is the tree of northern poetry, of the mysterious music of Ossian, and the melancholy moan of Scandinavian lore sounding like the waves that break on the night's plutonian shore.

The Cedar-Christian presents certain peculiar phases of the religious life. He is a type of the practical, robust, aggressive forms of piety which obtain within the area of Christianity. The slender, delicate, graceful palm tree of heaven-seeking spirituality is good for some, but not all, of the uses of religion. There is place and need also for the broad-based, many-boughed, wide-reaching cedar of an active practical life. This kind of religion can be adjusted to a greater number of conditions than the other: it goes anywhere and is good for almost everything. As Jesus took with him not only the idealistic John but the practical Peter, so there is always room for both poetry and prose in the service of the Gospel. The Cedar-Christian is the busy, versatile, courageous herald of the Cross, who will carry the truth up the wild mountains and through

the stony gorges. He will clothe the Alpine heights with verdure, and enliven wintry wastes with green forests of growth. It has been found that the fir trees are the natural conservators of the earth. Far up the craggy slopes where

“the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God,”

they fledge the mountain sides with cloud-condensers which bring down the rain and feed the streams. They by their clasping roots hold the soil from slipping downward. They are barriers against the avalanche. No greater injury can be done to any region than to destroy its mountain trees.

This is an emblem of some of the uses of true religion. The Cedar-Christian stands like Abraham between Sodom and its doom. His is the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous that brings blessings down and averts judgment. Many a home and hamlet abides in safety in the valley, because far up the mountain side the trees of God are standing and stretching out their arms in prayer. Woe to the land that loses the church and the Christian! France expelling the Huguenots, England driving away the Puritans, are examples of the deplorable results of such loss.

The uses of the cedar do not end with its life. Its noblest function begins with its fall, when its substance enters the service of man as building material. Well might the Hebrews prize the tree out of whose wood the temple and its furniture were largely constructed; nor can we overestimate the value of all the conifers to the structural uses of civilization at the present time. But as the tree must fall ere it can rise again in the

home or the temple, so it is with the service of the Christian to the world. It is through death that life fully reaches its utility. As the Lord himself must die in order to become the Savior of the world, so must his people submit to the law of sacrifice, ere they become structural parts of the building of the Temple of God.

There is a striking contrast between the leaves of the palm and the pine. The former are long, wide plumes of graceful shape, sometimes eight feet in length, crowning the tree with a feathery crest. Those of the pine are the smallest in size of any borne by trees—mere needles, straight; smooth and short. But this extreme limitation is compensated for by their numbers and persistent nature. They swarm on the boughs, and cling to the tree through summer's sun and winter's frost ; and it is this immense and continuous multiplication of leaf-surface, working day and night in all seasons, which renders the pine tree the most rapid grower of the forest. No other tree can thrive under such adverse conditions, because no other has such unfailing means of growth. This provision of nature prepares the conifer to be the shelter and guardian and champion of the vegetable world. So it is with the Cedar-Christian. He may not be distinguished by the floating banners of aerial beauty which animate other lives, but he has a value all his own. His gifts are those of small and perpetual utility—the average and commonplace of life. These are, after all, the most needful and enduring. The wind and the snow which would tear away or break down the great plumes of the palm, sweep harmlessly through the narrow needles of the pine. That tree is made for the blast and the cold.

Thus it is with the trees of the Lord that grow like

the cedar in Lebanon. They are endowed with the work of faith, the labor of love, the patience of hope. They are good for small things, faithful in minutiae, and they are also capable of endurance without limit. The tempest passes through their fine leafwork harmlessly—burdens slide off their small surface without damage. The winter which despoils other trees, only illustrates their vitality. And that test is sure to come. Not always are summer airs caressing the life. Sooner or later the storm arrives with Arctic severity. And then appears the glory of the Cedar-Christian. His religion is an *evergreen*. When the oak and the maple have lost their pride and stand bare and gaunt in the chilly air, then the fir trees assert their preeminence. And how we prize them in our bereavement!—those faithful friends whose verdure is the only relief to the white and ghastly landscape! We did not appreciate their value in the time of blossom and growth. Then other trees outshone them with their brilliant attire, and the pine and the hemlock looked sombre and poor in comparison. But now when everything else is apparently dead, they shine like angels of life. They are the only reminders of the past, and prophets of the future of nature's beauty and fertility.

This is the peerless province of Christianity. It is the evergreen of the moral world. In times of health and strength, when we are sufficient to ourselves, we may not realize our need of religion. This life seems so full and strong and pleasant: why look beyond it? But if you are wise, you will plant evergreens in your garden. You will find a place amid the flowering plants and fruit-bearing trees for the unworldly virtues of godliness. These may not appear so bright and winsome at first as the gayly-clad

pleasures of earth. By contrast they appear perhaps dark and gloomy.

But O, when the inevitable changes of time have done their work, and you stand amid the withered remains of mental pride and physical power, then well for you if the grace of God lifts its unsailing strength above your head! The trees of the Lord stand firm in the wintry blast which tears away every other plumage, but cannot despoil them of their verdure. Like the cedar of Lebanon, spiritual religion abides—brightest in the gloom, strongest in decay, living and life-giving in the midst of death. This is the tree that grows beside the river of the water of life that flows from underneath the throne of God.

XXI. THE TOWER OF BABEL.

“And they said, Go to! let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven: and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”—GEN. 11:4.

I WELL remember the picture of this structure, which I used to gaze at with wonder in my childhood, as I found it in the old family Bible. There was the huge pile rising in terraced strength above the plain, its successive stairs growing smaller as they rose toward the sky; while all around its base swarmed crowds of workmen. My own idea was, perhaps I was told, that the great tower was designed as a precaution against another deluge, a kind of artificial Ararat. How it could possibly serve as a refuge from a world-devouring flood, I did not stop to inquire. But I have since heard other and equally erroneous theories proposed, as to the origin and meaning of the Tower of Babel. There need be no confusion of thought on this subject, however, in the light of the plain teaching of Scripture. According to the story of Genesis, this tower was the first great monument of the reawakened and renewed pride of the human race. It was the assertion, in fresh and forcible shape, of the same impious ambition and concentrated selfishness which had brought the anti-deluvian world to ruin.

The Noachian deluge terminated not only a great section of human history, but a peculiar series of divine

experiments. The dispensation of that pre-flood era was one of centralized authority. God dealt with humanity as a unit—keeping all men close together, so that they spoke one language and inhabited a limited territory. There was no diversity of language or of government—no territorial diffusions, no ethnological distinctions (so far as the inspired record describes). The social, political, and religious conditions of that primitive world were, therefore, of one homogeneous type. The results, however, were disastrous. It soon appeared that the principle of centralization, which would have worked well under the conditions of righteousness, brought only mischief under those of sin. The law of unity lost all of its benign power when Eden was closed. Sinful men became more and more sinful through association. The close contacts of universal fraternity gave to error and evil a fearful opportunity for diffusion. The absence of all distinctions of language, custom and race—the great length of life, extending over centuries in many cases—the unification of mankind under one or a few authorities, all of these conditions rendered the development of sin something sure, swift and tremendous. Monstrosities of iniquity appeared. We may imagine the result if such an evil-doer as Nero and Robespierre could have lived six hundred years, with unlimited power of cruelty. No wonder that at last the universal corruption became intolerable, and God said, “The end of all flesh is come before me: for the earth is filled with violence through them: and behold I will destroy them with the earth.”

This threat was executed in the deluge, which like a sponge of oblivion wiped the world clean of its burdens and pollutions, and prepared the way for a new dispensa-

tion of the divine government toward men. The era thus introduced was one of diffusion and separateness. The human race was to be broken up and planted apart in groups and sections. Man must be displaced by men. Thenceforth God's dealings would be not with one organization, but with humanity in the form of different races, nations, tribes. This was the new program of progress which Noah and his family were commanded to set in motion. But men did not accept the new system. As soon as the generations of the ark began to increase and multiply, they also began to resume the ancient order of society. As fast as the world was peopled, the old principle of concentration asserted itself. There being but one language, and a common manner of life, there was no obstruction to this tendency. Ambitious leaders set up their standards once more; and soon all of the conditions of the antediluvian world were in danger of reappearing on the earth.

Babel was one product of this tendency. On the vast plain of Shinar, Nimrod, a great captain and organizer of men, founded a city and established an empire. The popular drift set strongly toward him, and a compact and ever-growing state became the nucleus of this revival of the primitive life. In order to intensify and fortify this spirit, the people planned a great structure as the sign and citadel of their cherished policy. It should be lofty and all dominant, to serve as their rallying point "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." This then was the motive, the aim of Babel. It was man's contradiction of God. It showed that he refused to obey the divine decree of separateness and diffusion. As such, it was a re-appearance of the antediluvian pride and selfish-

ness ; and if it had not been checked, this spirit would soon have made another deluge necessary. But Jehovah saw the danger and met it promptly. " And he said, behold the people is one, and they have all one language, and this they begin to do ; and now (if permitted to go on as they have begun), nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to ; let us go down and confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth."

Thus the divine will triumphed. God had said "go forth :" Pride had commanded "remain." God had said "radiate and occupy the earth :" Selfishness had ordered "concentrate and possess this land." But God was the stronger and his law prevailed. Babel stood strong and lofty—the towering sign and means of the centralizing principle of sin. But how soon was it a forsaken and lonely thing ! No thunderbolt from above struck it down, no earthquake from beneath overthrew it. There was breathed against it the still small voice of subtle power by which the Almighty turns the hearts of the children of men : and lo the builders spoke to each other in unintelligible language. No man could understand his fellows, and as a consequence, all cooperation became impossible. They could neither work nor live together : discord and confusion followed, and soon an inevitable dispersion of the conflicting elements took place. They separated, according to their affiliations of speech, and each group went off by itself. "Therefore is the name of it called Babel (confusion) because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth, and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."

The Tower remained, a silent and desolate monument of the defeated plans and broken hopes of sinful ambition. In after ages a great city grew up around it called Babylon, as a tribute to the original policy which Nebuchadnezzar endeavored to revive. But that, too, failed; and at this day nothing remains on the plain of Shinar, but a huge and mouldering mass of ruins, which travelers behold as the melancholy relic of the pride which once attempted to reverse the purposes of God.

Different versions have been made of this primeval story. It has been construed as literal narrative by nearly all of the reverent students of sacred history, who find its record of the diffusion of races confirmed by the ethnological divisions of mankind, and the archeological testimony to a radiation of the branches of the human family from some point in central Asia. Allowance must be made for the dramatic form of the narrative, as in the case of the account of creation. But the outlines of the story are a faithful description of the transition from the original homogeneous state of human society, to the heterogeneous condition now apparent.

Critics of the new school contend for another view of the ancient narrative. It is a case of idealized history—a condensed or foreshortened view, in typical characters, of those great agitations of early society that gave birth to the migrations from Central Asia which are now regarded as the beginning of all authentic history. Certain it is that as we trace the divisions of language, race and religion, back through the ages, we follow converging lines which lead to some prehistoric point in the Orient. But leaving these questions of historical criticism, we may ask for the ethical meaning of the narrative. Whatever

our interpretation of the terms of the story, we find in them the same lesson of moral truth.

The tower whose top was to reach to heaven indicated the *spirit of Sin, as opposed to the principle of Holiness*. It stood for the tendency of centralization which would resist the divine ordinance of diffusion. Babel meant that selfish action of hoarding pride, which refused to comply with God's decree of generous forth-flowing bestowal. Seen in this light it was typical and prophetic. Not only a relic of the power and temper which ruined the world before the flood, it was a specimen of what the same spirit was to aim at through all the future. For as matter of fact, men have been building Towers of Babel ever since, and are doing so still.

Sin is Selfishness. It always makes of human nature a self-centered and self-seeking thing. It gives to life the centripetal tendency, and that alone. On the other hand *Holiness is Love.* Wherever it exists, it shows itself in self-denial and generosity. Its impulse is centrifugal. These two principles have been at work in every age. Selfishness has been gathering humanity into compact masses of monopoly. Nimrod, lord of Babel, was the first of a long line of grasping despots who have tried to make the world their own, such as Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, the Caesars, Charles V, and Napoleon Bonaparte. They have been exponents of centralized authority, as distinguished from the spirit of personal liberty and popular government. The same tendency has appeared in religion :—witness the all-grasping and subduing power of Mohammedanism and Romanism, systems which deny to the one soul rights of freedom and progress. We trace this principle also in the commercial world, where it has led to the formation of

great combinations of Capital or of Labor, each of which aims at a monopoly of its own department to the exclusion of all rivals. Is it not equally evident in the drift of population from the country to the cities, where the individual is lost in the mass, and social and moral congestion is the result?

Over against this converging, focalizing tendency, there has always been at work the Divine principle of radiation. In politics we call it the democratic idea. In business it is the "live and let live" principle. In society it is "altruism." In religion it is Love. Now it is to be observed that Providence is always on the side of this energy. As nature never allows her active elements to stagnate in close combination, but keeps them in circulation—always approaching and always fleeing from each other, so is it in the moral world. God has never favored the reserved, exclusive life. Holiness is unselfishness. It sets life in motion—ever receiving and ever bestowing, acquiring and imparting. Wherever Pride builds its tower and says, "here abide and flourish for your own sake," the Lord comes down to see it as of old, and at once issues the decree of dispersion, "Go forth and live for others."

This was the meaning of the Messiah's career. When Jesus of Nazareth came to the chosen people, he found them in a state of spiritual congestion, shut in to their own interests, and with no Messianic hopes but those which began and ended in Jewish pride. But the word of the Lord which the Christ fulfilled was the annunciation "I bring you good tidings which shall be to all people." This was the unwelcome but irresistible Gospel which, after breaking down all of the barriers of Hebrew exclusive-

ness, and teaching disciples and people alike the new law of sympathy and beneficence, culminated in the commission, " Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." This was the principle and policy which gave to Pentecost its special meaning. For in that " gift of tongues " the ancient miracle was repeated, but with a new purpose. At Babel a diversity of language was instituted in order that the race might be scattered abroad, and so weaken the power of sin. At Pentecost there was a new variety of speech, in order that the Gospel might be diffused throughout the world, to build up the kingdom of righteousness. The first miracle was a curse: the second was a blessing. By the former the one became many—by the latter the many became one.

And now let us observe the bearing of this principle on *personal experience*. Do we not each know something about the Babel spirit? Have we not found in our own lives the element of Egotism warring against the law of Love, and bringing us into captivity to the power of selfishness? How natural the craving for our own emolument! We labor and endure, we toil and suffer in order to gather, amass, and keep for ourselves! So we build our Tower of self-culture, enrichment, fame: and Pride enthroned thereon exclaims, " Is not this great Babylon which I have built, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" What place then can be found for the Divine plan of self-denial, that any one should heed the impulse, " go forth and live for others?"

The old centripetal tendency toward a life of selfish contentment and absorption is as active now as ever. We know it well. And we also know that we have suffered because of it. For never did the Lord God allow such a

reversal of his will to remain and prosper. As of old, he comes down to see the builders of Babel and he often scatters them abroad in his displeasure. So it fared with the youth who received a distinct summons to a life of usefulness in the church, but who was lured away from it by the attractions of selfish money-making. He lived to deplore his mistake, amid the failure of his plans and the ruin of his prosperity. So it proved with the parent who, when asked to consecrate her child to the missionary life, preferred to keep it for her own comfort at home; but when sickness and death despoiled her of her treasure, she found too late what an error she had committed. So it befell with those Baptist churches of this country, who refused to join the missionary movement in the early part of this century. Misled by a false theology, they would not look beyond their own immediate interests. But as time passed on, they discovered that they had lost even what they tried to preserve, for they were left to stagnate and dwindle at home while their more liberal brethren were prospering abroad.

Thus it has been shown again and again, on the largest and on the smallest scale, that the Babel-spirit of sheer conservatism is in the long run sure to recoil on itself with disastrous effect. God is against it. Contrary to the law and method of his own life, opposed to all the precepts and precedents of his Word, selfishness is suicidal. On the other hand, whoever heeds the example of Christ, and denies himself for others' sake, will in the end secure his own best advantage. Give and it shall be given unto you. There is that scattereth and yet increaseth: and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty.

O these Towers of Babel! how numerous they are! how proud and heaven-defying! We are building them now, perhaps, although we know it not. When Conscience whispers "go," and Inclination pleads "remain;" when Duty bids us "give" and Policy urges us to keep; when the voice of the Lord commands us to leave all and follow him along the paths of Sacrifice, and Self-interest argues for an interior and exclusive life; if then we heed the lower rather than the higher call, what are we but Babel-builders? And as surely as the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, so surely will we find ourselves arrested and defeated, sooner or later.

He can "scatter" the builders so easily! The strongest erections of human pride are as the mist of the morning before the breath of his mouth. That lone pile of crumbling masonry that has loomed for ages, desolate above the Oriental plain, is an image of the failure of human plans and operations that have only ambition for their motive, and selfish emolument for their aim. Compare the monumental ruin of the empires of Caesar and Napoleon, with the ever growing success of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. He owed nothing to military prowess, or political management, or personal egotism of any kind. The symbol of his career was the cross, and that meant complete self-sacrifice. At first indeed it seemed repulsive;—it drove away from him the timid and the indolent; it antagonized the prejudice of the Jew and the taste of the Gentile: even his own disciples forsook him and fled, when they saw their Master about to be crucified. How then could such a principle or policy have anything but a destructive effect on its cause?

And yet it proved to be directly the reverse. His

own prophecy was "I if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." And those words have been completely fulfilled in the wonderful attractive power of the cross. It has become the center of the moral world, around which has gathered the best life of the ages. To it have converged the faith and hope and love of ever multiplying multitudes. It has counteracted the discordant effects of sin, harmonized the conflicting factions of humanity, reconciled earth to heaven; and it now stands as the heart and center of the most flourishing organism in the world, the kingdom of righteousness which is yet to cover the earth.

"Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ." Build no more Towers of Babel, whose ruins will only serve to commemorate your folly and defeat. Live no longer the self-centered life, whose motive and aim are of the earth earthly. Accept the spirit of him who "pleased not himself, but gave his life a ransom for many." Obey the divine impulses of active charity. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." So shall you have part in that fair fabric, of which the prophets spoke as the "Mountain of the Lord's House" which shall be established in the top of the mountains, and "all nations shall flow unto it." For where sin abounded with its Babel-dispersions, grace will much more abound in the unity of the spirit and the bonds of peace.

XXII. INFERNAL PROVIDENCE.

"An enemy hath done this."—MATT. 13:28.

A STRONOMERS tell us that there is a star in the sky which no man has ever seen or will see ; and yet they know just where and what it is. The fixed star Algol has always shown perturbations, which can be accounted for only on the theory that it is associated with another—a non-luminous body. Mathematical reasoning has determined the place and size of that disturbing element, in a dark sphere, which will always remain unseen and unknown, except through its influence on the bright orb.

There are many similar mysteries in the moral firmament. When we study the career of truth and goodness in this world, we notice many effects which cannot be ascribed to natural causes. Why should that bright star of christian character be suddenly obscured, that noble life be disabled, that good cause suffer arrest or defeat? The noble array of planets that circle around the sun of righteousness, is frequently disturbed as by alien forces. Abraham prevaricates, Moses becomes petulant, the chosen people of God fall into idolatry. Now on the theory that there is nothing beyond the scope of nature and human nature, how can we account for men doing just what they were not accustomed or inclined to do? If the corruption of the loyal heart of David in his old age is explained by reference to his wild, untutored youth, what shall be said

of the peaceful and benign youth of Solomon followed by the melancholy decadence of his closing years? And if all such instances are accounted for by the hypothesis of the depravity of the human heart, there remains one exception to the universal rule.

Consider the character and career of Jesus of Nazareth. There was a nature entirely free from apparent or latent sin; it was absolutely holy. And yet that life was darkened by sorrow, and finally disabled by moral adversity. This was not wholly due to the opposition of wicked men, for his omnipotence might have shielded him from their attacks. He was at one with the Father, and was filled with the purity and peace of heaven. Nevertheless his spirit was often straitened by a strange sad oppression. He suffered acutely from burdens not his own. He was withheld by enemies whom no one else could see. In the wilderness, in the garden and on the cross, he felt the malign power of moral evil in its extremest rigor. Whence came those attacks?—not from men, for they were secret and spiritual; not from his own nature, for he was “holy, harmless and undefiled.” There remains but one reasonable hypothesis. As when a large and splendid star in the heavens is periodically obscured, our knowledge of nature’s laws compels us to infer the existence of a dark and silent sphere as the cause of that effect, so with the derangements of the moral world. We know that there must be such a thing as Error, from the reverses of Truth; such a thing as Evil, from the perturbations of Good. If we had no Bible to throw light on these phenomena, our inductive reason would soon construct the Bible theory of sin and salvation. When we see every effort of righteousness counteracted, every form of wisdom paral-

leled by folly, and all the issues of love polluted by the interferences of iniquity, the logic of life constrains us to arrive at the same conclusion which our text indicates.

The man in the parable who had sowed good seed in his field, found at harvest time that tares had sprung up with the wheat. He said "an enemy hath done this." That was a reasonable inference. He knew from experience that something never comes from nothing, that good seed does not produce evil fruit, that like begets like. And inasmuch as neither he nor any one of his friends had sowed tares in that field, he was justified in declaring "an enemy hath done this." By parity of reasoning, we reach a similar conclusion from the premises of human history. So uniform and effective have been the hindrances encountered by Right in this world, that we know that Wrong must be a constant and active force here. So minute and direct, so wisely and skillfully planned have been these oppositions, that we must infer from them an intelligent supervision—such an impulse, in fact, as only a vigorous mind and will could impart. And so vast, so perpetual and powerful and prevailing have been these attacks, that we are sure they must have come from a Person who is as mighty as he is malign. Thus we arrive at a conclusion which is identical with the revelations made in the Bible, of a Spirit of Evil, a god of this world, a tempter, an adversary who is the cause or condition of all the moral evils of human experience.

The *personality of the devil* is a doctrine which is not so prominent in the creed of Christians as it once was. It is strenuously opposed by many professed believers, who contend for what they call a "more liberal faith." They hold that this dark subject is incompatible with the

advanced ideas of theological progress. It belongs to the lower phases of spiritual evolution, the ages of superstition which now lie behind us. These reformers contend that the theory of a Kingdom of Evil presided over by a mighty and malign Intelligence, is inconsistent with the supremacy and beneficence of God. It is one of the figments of the gloomy imagination of a Dante or a Milton —born of the grotesque materialism of mediaeval religion. And when we ask how we are to construe the words of Scripture which describe the “Prince of this world,” the “Prince of the power of the air,” “your adversary the devil,” “the rulers of the darkness of this world,” the “accuser of the brethren,” it is replied that these are figurative expressions by which principles are personified. They stand for the Element of Evil, embodying it in order that the human imagination may be more vividly impressed with its reality.

But does this hypothesis satisfy the conditions of the case? The Bible represents Satan as holding conversation with human beings, not only with the woman in the garden, but with Jesus in the wilderness. In the book of Job, this evil being is described as contending for the possession of the patriarch; in the book of Daniel his minister withstands the representative of heaven; in the book of Revelation he and his angels are referred to by name as the enemies of Christ and his church. This is the general, the frequent usage of the Bible. Everywhere it refers not to a principle but to a Person, as the active parent or promoter of sin. It is Satan who desires to have Peter that he may sift him as wheat; it is the Devil who put into the heart of Judas to betray his Master; it is Satan who filled the heart of Ananias to lie unto the Holy Ghost. Can

we substitute an abstraction or an element for these plain statements, and satisfy the narrative? Why should the Bible warn us against the snares of the devil, the devices of Satan, the principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, if nothing more is meant than sin in general or particular? Such language is misleading, if there is no Personality behind the terms employed. We do not find truth or righteousness—the principles of Good, thus embodied, except in one instance. In the book of Proverbs, "Wisdom" is represented as speaking with human voice. But that is not historical narrative, and it is not repeated elsewhere in the Bible. Whereas, the personality of Satan is a factor in all the parts of the Bible, in its prose and its poetry, its didactic, historical, prophetic portions alike. Satan is uniformly spoken of as a being, as real as any of the human or superhuman personages.

As for the alleged incompatability of this doctrine with the supremacy of the divine government and the reign of the Gospel, it is enough to say that this objection holds equally against the prevalence of evil as a principle. Sin is a fact, a force, on this earth; it is an omnipresent fact of the most evident and painful character; it is a perpetual force of the most desperate malignity. It has filled the world with moral suffering and ruin. It is now resisting the law of God and destroying his creatures. How can all this be reconciled with the infinite power and wisdom and holiness of God?

It is plain that nothing is gained by substituting a principle for a being, for it is as difficult to account for the one as for the other. And there remains the greater mystery, how a mere abstraction or element could organize,

direct, and inspire the sinfulness of the world so ably and so successfully as the Satan of the Bible has done. For he is described by Scripture as a great adversary plotting against the Most High in heaven, opposing him on earth, through his disciplined hosts attacking the truth at every point and at all times, and doing this so effectively as to compel our recognition of supernatural skill, courage and power. Now all this is unaccountable on the theory of sinfulness as a blind impulse or disease, or as the sum total of human infirmity and ill-will. The history of this painful earth points as directly to a Personal Enemy as to a Personal Friend, in the supernatural world. And is it not noteworthy that, as a rule, those who reject the personality of Satan, also disbelieve in that of the Holy Spirit? The same arguments obtain in both directions. We have just as much reason for the belief that the Spirit of God is only a personal name for the operations or method or influence of God, as we have for a corresponding view of the Evil One.

The Bible makes this as plain as ordinary language could express the idea. Our Savior in explaining the parable of the tares, said "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man:" and of the tares, "the enemy that sowed them is the devil." Here is an exact parallel between Christ and Satan, as two beings equally concerned in human affairs. If we believe, as we do, in the reality of a *Divine Providence* interposing in the lives of men benignly, must we not also believe in an *Infernal Providence* interfering therein maliciously?

This is the Biblical philosophy of history. It is the inspired method of accounting for the facts of time. As for the facts themselves, there is no difference of opinion.

All agree that sin and sorrow have, from the beginning of human history, coexisted with righteousness and peace in this world; that evil has always been arrayed against good, that Death has ever been the foe of Life. The peculiarity of the Christian belief is that, just as we hold that a supreme holy Being is necessary to account for the reign of righteousness on earth, so a superhuman Enemy is needed to explain the opposition to that kingdom. If there is a Divine Providence superintending and sustaining righteousness in this world, there must be an Infernal Providence opposing and discouraging it.

Now this is, confessedly, a very painful topic and one which, for that reason perhaps, is not often dwelt upon in Christian thought. We are all affected somewhat by the mild climate of the present moral era, with its prevalence of "sweetness and light," and we naturally prefer to dwell on the brighter sides of the truth. But will closing our eyes to dreadful things free us from them? Disease, vice and crime are repulsive subjects of thought; shall we turn our back upon them? Is it wise to ignore such topics as Intemperance, Pauperism, War, and never take them into the account in our estimates of society, because of their obnoxious features? Of course not. If the cholera were threatening to ravage this land, we should feel in duty bound to study the terrible subject, if only to find the means of protecting ourselves against its perils. Why not then be as open-eyed and vigilant with respect to this preeminent danger? If there is a tremendous conspiracy of spiritual enemies against our souls' welfare, ought we not at least to recognize and realize it, in order to guard ourselves against it? There are several good reasons for believing that an Infernal Providence coexists

in this world with the Divine Providence—the one for the curse, and the other for the blessing of man.

I. This theory is necessary to a *clear understanding of human history*. The checkered aspect of time, abounding in lights and shadows, peace and war, good and evil, is an utter mystery to those who regard the divine government as the only controlling element in human affairs. If there is nothing outside of human nature but a universe of holiness, whence come the awful visitations of death and darkness which have blighted our world? But on the hypothesis of a Kingdom of Evil established and operative here, alongside of the domain of righteousness, all is plain. Then we see how it came to pass that even in Eden the Tree of Life was shadowed by the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil—that Abel was withheld by Cain, and the sons of God were misled by the daughters of men. Here were the tares springing up with the wheat from the very first. And when we see the double harvest ripening ever afterward—Abraham's faith and Sodom's iniquity, Isaac offset by Ishmael and Jacob by Esau, we are able to say in explanation “an enemy hath done this.” It was no accidental coincidence that with each step of the progress of right, a corresponding advance was made by wrong—that Moses encountered Pharaoh, Samuel the wise was displaced by Saul the reckless, and even David and Solomon were led to contradict their virtues with proportionate vices. We understand by this means the dread dualism which gives to every page of history a bright side and a dark. We see why the career of Jesus should have been so strangely divided between angels and demons, the belief of the people and the opposition of the rulers, the love of his disci-

ples and the treachery of Peter and Judas. It is the old story—"an enemy hath done this." The doctrine of an Infernal Providence is absolutely indispensable to a clear understanding of the Bible narrative.

The same theory is needed to throw light on the problems of secular history. How else can we solve the painful problems of perpetual conflict and universal distraction, until we grasp the idea of two great antagonists, Christ and Satan, ever competing for the possession of humanity—the one sowing good seed and the other tares? Then all is plain. The historian finds in this an explanation of the fact that just as soon as the Church of Christ was fairly established as an institution in the world, the old idolatry was revived to oppose it in the form of the Papacy. He sees why it was that when the Gospel began to reassert itself in the twelfth century by the Albigenses and the Waldenses, it was at once met and counteracted by the rise of the Franciscan and Dominican orders—preaching and proselyting monks who saved Rome from its enemies. The same philosophy explains that most marvellous conjunction of Luther and Loyola :—the German reformation which shook the foundation of the Papacy, was the signal for the Jesuits to come to its rescue and give it a new life. Thus the student of history has a clue to problems otherwise insoluble. The theory of an Infernal Providence antagonizing the Divine, explains why it was that the same year which brought the Mayflower to Plymouth Rock also led the first slave-ship to the shores of Virginia—that as soon as the noble science of Chemistry began to be applied to the preparation of medicine and food for men, it was also employed for the manufacture of poisonous liquors to destroy them—that the print-

ing press which has multiplied Bibles for cheap distribution to the masses, has also disseminated infidel literature as widely through the world—that the religious liberty on which we pride ourselves in behalf of the Gospel, has been perverted to all kinds of license for error—that the German scholarship which produced a Neander and a Tholuck has given a Strauss and a Bauer to the world—that the same ship which carries a missionary to Asia, often carries a cargo of idols manufactured in England to be sold to the pagans—that the opening of Africa to the churches has also exposed it to the inroads of the liquor traffic; when we see these things we are startled and shamed but we are not mystified. We trace effects to cause, and have at least a mental satisfaction in knowing that “an enemy hath done this.”

And therefore we affirm that just as a belief in Divine providence is necessary to reduce the chaos of events to cosmic order, and give us a Copernican astronomy of the moral universe, so the conception of an Infernal Providence is needed to account for the perturbations everywhere evident. The bright stars are eclipsed, the smooth orbits are deranged, the astral harmony is impaired at times, because not only Christ but Satan is at work, the one benignly, the other malignantly, in the affairs of men and nations.

2. This conception is necessary to a *clear understanding of our personal experience*. No one can read aright the signs of his own inner and outer life, who does not take into account the fell interferences of Satan. We know that a true faith in Divine Providence is necessary to a complete view of all the ways and workings of life, showing how dependent we are for wisdom and purity and

peace, on the inspiration of Him in whom we live and move and have our being. But what shall we do with the derangements and demolitions of the moral order in our souls? It is not enough to say that our own corrupt nature is responsible for all the wrong impulses and acts of life, for we know that there are limits to our volitional sinfulness. We can easily distinguish between the ideas, desires and resolutions which are of our own begetting, and those which arise in us apart from our self-consciousness. Such there are. Who has not felt at times the sudden intrusion of thoughts and impulses of evil, which came he knows not whence? Perhaps he tried to resist and exclude them, but they forced themselves upon him like an alien cloud or a wind from space, darkening and chilling the soul. Such phenomena are common in the history of wrong-doing. Criminals often speak in their confessions, of the first impulse to their crime coming to them like a suggestion from another's lips. Guiteau, the murderer of President Garfield, declared that he was awakened in the night by a voice that bade him do that deed. Now after all allowance is made for psychological illusions and self-deception, is not the Bible theory of an Infernal Providence a reasonable hypothesis for the explanation of such cases? If we believe, as we do, that great and good deeds have been due to the inspiration of the Spirit of God moving human souls, why should we not believe that the false and fatal actions of men are traceable to "the Prince of the Power of the Air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience?"

This is, indubitably, the teaching of the Word. It was the devil who put into the heart of Judas to betray his master; it was Satan who filled the heart of Ananias

to lie unto the Holy Ghost ; it was an evil spirit that came on Saul when he tried to take the life of David. Diabolical suggestion is treated as a fact and as a factor in human experience. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not." Satan is transformed into an angel of light. He is the father of lies. Here then is one of the causations of much of our personal perversion, and a clue is found to many of the problems of religious error. The wisest students of such phenomena as modern Spiritualism produces, have reported that there is no hypothesis which more clearly accounts for some of those mysteries than that of infernal instigation. They are cases of demonism, as evidently as any of the instances of diabolical possession described in the New Testament. Bearing these things in mind, it will result that much relief comes to us in the solution of problems otherwise impenetrable—both in our own and others' experience.

But the doctrine of Infernal providence must be held in harmony with other truths.

a. Satanic interference in our life *does not deliver us from responsibility for our sins.* Free-will remains in the midst of all temptations and antagonisms. Adam might have withstood the tempter ; Judas could have withstood the devil ; we need not yield to the adversary. Jesus was tempted in all points like as we, yet without sin. There is no excuse for sin. As it is possible for man to withstand the Spirit of grace, so can he refuse to submit to the Spirit of evil.

b. With this understanding we can see that much *patience and hopefulness* may be cherished with regard to humanity. For even although men are responsible for their sins, they are not wholly blameworthy. They did

not originate their sinfulness. Human nature is not the author of evil. Around all the corruption and wrong-doing of men, there is this margin of allowance. Jesus recognized this in his prayer for his enemies,—“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” Paul was enabled to make the same distinction for himself, “it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” Let us then in all our self-consciousness reckon on the factors of good and evil as distinct. It will help us to have hope and courage for ourselves, to feel that we are not the originators of all the evil that is in us: there is “a law, in our members warring against the law in our mind,” for which the Infernal Providence is responsible.

c. This doctrine should render us all the *more cautious and sensitive about our moral exposure*. If it is true that we are continually the objects of a superhuman enmity, of a great conspiracy of the rulers of the darkness of this world to ruin the soul of man, ought we not to be awake and alarmed? What would be said of a person or a people who refused to believe that they had an enemy, after war had been declared against them? Suppose that the American patriots had cherished the idea that it was not George III or his generals who were against them, but merely the principle of Royalty! That would be wisdom compared with the belief which denies the personality of Satan, and holds that we are exposed only to an evil principle or a moral disease. Of all the wiles of the devil, this is one of the most subtle and dangerous. For if he can induce us to believe that he does not exist, he has us at a great advantage. Why should we guard ourselves against an unreal enemy?

The Bible has no doubts whatever on this subject.

Nothing could be clearer and more positive than its references to the great adversary as the Personal enemy of man. It warns us of his devices. It urges us to "be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." We are not to give place to the devil, but to resist him, steadfast in the faith. To this end ample provision is made in that "whole armor of God" which will enable us to "stand against the wiles of the devil." Resist him and he will flee from you. For a great Champion is on our side. Christ was "manifested to destroy the works of the devil;" and his assurance to Peter remains for all his people "Satan desired to have you that he might sift you as wheat; but I made supplication for thee that thy faith fail not."

Let us then believe in both of these Providences—the Divine supervision of human affairs, according to which "it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure," and the Infernal interference of the "Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Both of these great forces are necessary to a complete philosophy of history. And each of them must be reckoned as a factor in the problem of our own moral life; for they represent to us the awful dualism of the moral universe—eternal life and everlasting death, between which we must make our choice for time and for eternity.

XXIII. THE ORGAN.

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."—I COR. 12:4.

OF ALL the musical instruments made and used by man, the Organ is the most comprehensive. Other instruments excel it in particular qualities, but none in respect to volume, variety, and protraction of effect. It is an orchestra, a choir of mechanical voices, all combined and at the command of one will. When we listen to the wonderful reach of its scale, from the rumbling thunder of the pedal to the ethereal delicacy of its loftiest notes, we seem to be gazing on a cathedral of sound, rising from deep sunken massive foundations to sky-piercing altitudes of spire and finial.

This mountain of melody is still more wonderful in its internal construction. Let any one attempt to follow and grasp all the minutiae of material and method which go to make up this great organism, and he will be astonished. The three chief departments of Pedal, Great and Swell; the apparatus of keyboard, stop and lever ruling tube and duct and bellows, with their various woods and metals, grooves, sound-boards, tables and slides; the contrivances for distributing and regulating the pressure of air, the exquisite adaptations of size and quality to produce tone and volume, and the vast variety of melodic effects thus prepared for and produced; all this multiplicity of parts and properties resembles nothing so much as that

crowning mystery of nature, the human body. And when the observer notes how this huge aggregation of tuneful possibilities is narrowed down to the touch of the musician's finger and made obedient to his will, so that his art can use it with perfect ease and accuracy to express his thought, he can think of nothing less than a magnificent ocean steamer, guided by one man's mind around the world.

But the crowning glory of the organ is that it is the only musical instrument which confines itself mainly to the service of religion. Other instruments may be and are employed for the lighter uses of recreation, sometimes prostituted to base purposes. The organ refuses to be degraded or even treated with levity. Grand and grave in its majestic nature, it must be employed seriously. Men never see it in the dance hall, or hear it in a theatre, or find it used for merely sensuous purposes. It may serve to complete orchestral effects, but its true place has ever been in the temple. Invented or developed in the Middle Ages, when the glorious cathedrals were rising as the embodiment of the spiritual aspiration of humanity, (for they were really the architectural prophets of the Reformation) the Organ belongs to the Church. Its best expression is always of the religious sentiment. Not for the ballad, the waltz or the serenade, but for the oratorio and the anthem, the reverent psalm, the sacred hymn, does the Organ reserve its fullest voice. It is the Levite of art, whose proper office is the "service of song in the house of the Lord."

We find in all this a noble illustration of *the Holy Spirit's connection with this world*. For when we look for the secret of the Organ's variety of volume and tone,

what do we discover? Behind and through all of the means of expression, one great motive power is operating —the atmosphere. This element is the animating principle of all the pipes and resonant substances; when it ceases, the Organ is dumb. So when we look back of the machinery of church and creed, and search for the cause of personal and collective religious phenomena in all their various features and forcefulness, we find a Divine Inspiration. And not only is this true of the moral world. Nature and History witness to the same great impulse from above. When the Spirit of God was brooding the abyss of chaos, the infinite Breath began to move through the pipes of being; and what we call the physical universe, in all of its avenues and arts, is but the materialized rendering of that celestial influence. To the ear that can hear, all of the pure and true sounds of the world, from the diapason of ocean surf upon the shore, to the caroling of birds in the cloudy blue, are but different tones of that heavenly principle which is the life of all that lives.

It was reserved, however, for the new creation to receive a still higher inspiration from the Creator. For when Jesus breathed upon his disciples and said "receive ye the Holy Ghost," he sent forth a power which has made and is making a new music in the ears of time. It is the Holy Spirit, coming into human life like a divine wind, that has awakened and developed the highest forces of our nature. As the air applied to the manifold mechanism of the Organ, takes tone and power therefrom, so has the inspiration of God been vocalized by the life and labor of Christendom. It has been expressed in the hymns and sermons and books of consecrated minds. It has appeared in the heroisms and triumphs of the saints. It has

been the animating principle of all those who have lived soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. For in this way we read the text "there is a diversity of gifts, but the same Spirit."

And more:—we believe that the same divine impulse works behind all true progress of every kind. The Spirit of God is still brooding the inchoate mass of human potentialities, and whatsoever things are true beautiful and good in this world are of his begetting. Doubt it not: no matter what the pride of man may claim for itself, the original causation of all truth and goodness is with God. The many-voiced Organ of human history has produced its grand marches of progress, noble anthems of political reform, sweet symphonies of art, wonderful fugues of science, and grand oratorios of morality, because of the breathings of divine impulse which have been its unrecognized but actual motive power.

But we must not press too far the analogy which we have drawn, for the result would be to regard the Holy Spirit as merely a principle or a method of divine operation. The wind that feeds the organ is not the primary cause of its music, but the instrumental. It alone would produce only a rushing roar of all kinds of melodic sounds, as the various pipes gave vent to its pressure. It is the skill of the performer who holds the huge mechanism in his command at the keyboard, which guides the multitude of airy voices into an orderly procession of musical thought. This is the mechanical mystery, almost miracle of the Organ, in which it so far transcends all other instruments. For it is a world in itself, of complex and powerful mechanism, capable of the most vast and varied

expression, and yet easily, and absolutely under the control of the musician's thought and hand.

The Holy Spirit furnishes more than the motive power of Christian life—he is its intelligent parent as well. As a *divine Person*, he presides at the keyboard of execution, not only inspiring men with energy, but directing and using them with authority. Without this personal presidency, history would have been a mere chaos of unorganized facts and forces. There could have been no logical sequence of events, leading humanity along the lines of rational progress. Providence would have been unknown and impossible in time. The world would have seen only a weltering sea of human billows tossed to and fro by the chance and change of nature. But how different the actual aspects of history! We see that "through the ages one increasing purpose runs;" we observe threads of purpose disentangling the confusions of national life, patterns of beneficent design gradually emerging from the disorders of war, great utilities subserved even by human error and crime, and through all political and social and personal vicissitudes a "Philosophy of History" slowly evolving the great truths of law and order. Why is this? It is because a divine Artist is at the keyboard of time. The vast complexity of life that we call nature and human nature, is after all an organism whose vast and voluminous intricacies are ruled or overruled by one supreme Intelligence. It is the thought of God which presides over the mysteries of this world. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

This is the secret of whatever true melody and harmony has been heard upon this earth. And when we think of the bewildering variety of forces here coöperating

or conflicting, the diverse and discordant elements of human society, our own personal and relative infirmities, we feel that none but an infinitely wise, mighty and good Being could have mastered and used such a medley of elements. Left to itself, the race of man would long ago have lapsed into a universal dissonance, a mere cacophony. It is because the Spirit of God is still brooding the abyss that we hear

“Aeonian music measuring out
The steps of Time, the shocks of Chance,
The blows of Death.”

In the light of the similitude we have been tracing, human life explains to us many of the secrets of its construction. We see the reason for the endless varieties of personal character and capacity, why no two persons are the same or even very similar in their endowments. It is because we are all members of one great organism and are contributive to the unity of its effects. What kind of a musical product would be heard if the pipes and valves of the Organ were all alike? It is difference of tone that produces the pleasing composite called harmony: even discords may be necessary to some musical effects. In many of the large Organs now in use, there are pipes so huge that a man could crawl through them, and others as small as a child's trumpet. Between those extremes are thousands of all shapes and capacities, yet every one furnishing some distinct and important element of the general sea of sound. The master musician knows the character of these factors, and will on occasion summon any one of them to his service. Few of those who listen to the grand composition that rolls and trembles through the air, recognize the skill which is required in developing and

combining the minute and mighty elements which compose it.

So also is it with Humanity—the vast and wonderful instrument on which the divine thought has been playing since time began. If all men had been alike, how tame and tedious a thing human history would have been! But they never were or will be alike, and it is their endless differences which have furnished the Holy Spirit with the material for his choral effects. How great the capacity of such a life as that of Moses, or Paul, or Luther! Through them the heavenly breath poured and was shaped into diapason swells of moral power, thunderous rolls of truth that will reverberate through the ages until the end. But there is also the delicate quality of such a nature as that of Hannah or Ruth, John or Timothy, which will give to the Spirit the still small voice of tenderness, or the bird-like song of love. And who shall say which is the more welcome to the ear of history—such an oceanic roar of truth as swept from the lips of prophets and apostles, or the simple strains of David's harp—the sweetness of Mary's 'Magnificat'?

No one soul could ever utter the entire fullness of divine truth. To each has been given a particular register of thought and expression, according to its own capacity. There was one nature, born of woman, that did render the whole gamut of celestial inspiration. But Jesus of Nazareth was God manifest in the flesh. In him dwelt all the fullness of the godhead bodily, and the world has been listening ever since to the endless amplitude of that "Oratorio of the Messiah" which streamed from his life. But he had no successor. The best that could be done after him was for the apostles to make of themselves each a new

voice in the chorus ; and they handed this office to others and they to others still, until the melodic tradition has reached our own time. And now it is for the personal Christian to become a particular pipe in the sacred Organ, in order to vocalize some tone or temper in the divine symphony. Let us accept this function and fill it faithfully. Without comparison or envy, caring not whether our personal capacity is greater or smaller than that of others, let us adjust ourselves each to the work that is given us to do. And whether it be the orchestral power of a Spurgeon, or the home-song of a Sunday School teacher, whether oratory or authorship or conversation for Christ be our office, let each life open its full capacity to the divine inspiration. The delicate pipe which emits a sigh or a shrill almost too fine to hear, is as useful to the organist as the huge cylinder from which he lets loose the thunder as from a cannon's mouth.

The organ is provided with still another means of developing its resources, in its *system of "stops."* These represent sections of the instrument which enable the performer to vary the temper or complexion of a tune, giving to the same theme different aspects and powers. What the degree of light is to a picture, or the disposition of a person to his speech, that is the stop in use to the playing of an organist. It will add pathos or pungency, a brilliant or a darkening effect, a soft or a powerful influence to the music. It is the climate of the art.

Now it is very noticeable in the history of the church, that the Divine musician has often varied the quality, forcefulness and effect of Christian life. No two ages have shown the same religious phenomena. One generation will be absorbed in metaphysical theology, another mainly

concerned with ecclesiastical problems, another with aggressive religious work, another with the development of spiritual experience. These variations are sometimes so great as to perplex the Christian observer, who cannot understand why the present differs so widely from the past. The explanation is that the Organist has pulled out a new stop. He has given to Christian thought another direction, to Christian feeling a new impulse; and if we were wise enough to hear aright, we should enjoy the musical variations thus produced, as we hear the old melodies sung in another key.

Perhaps we may find herein that which will account for the most striking, and to some the most painful, of all the phenomena of modern history—the division of the Church of Christ into what are called “denominations.” In some aspects—those of sectarian controversy and animosity—this differentiation is an evil. But in other and broader lights, there appears a great utility in this segregation of believers. Does it not serve to adapt the manifold grace of God to the varied needs of a complex and changing humanity? Does not each of these Christian sects in its peculiar presentation of the truth—its separate phrasing of spiritual life, furnish to the Gospel theme just such a melodic variety as when the organist brings out the different capacities of his instrument in the service of some one tune? As a matter of fact, each of the orthodox bodies has done some specific work, and made some particular contribution to the religious world, which could have been rendered in no other way. One of the most eloquent preachers of the Liberal faith has made this admission with respect to Calvinism. Denying its doctrinal truthfulness, he yet found in it a valuable element to

complete the harmony of the system of truth. It represents the element of law; it is the sub-bass of the music of the moral universe, without which the organ would lose those pedal-thunders which are the basis of all its grandest effects.

Let no one object therefore to the endless diversities of Christian literature, labor and methods, which characterize our times. They are simply the divine variations on the original theme. Christianity is ever the same and yet always changing. The words spoken and uttered eighteen centuries ago, remain as the fixed and final law of our religion. The staple truths of sin and salvation, God and man, earth and heaven, are just what they were then and will be to the end. There is only one Gospel to be preached, one Lord, one faith, one baptism to be accepted. And yet, such are the perpetual varieties of means and method employed by the one Spirit, that there is a continuous readjustment of divine grace to the needs of the world. Every day listens to some new rendering of the old truth, every year hears an anthem never sung before. Mankind can no more outgrow the Gospel, than they can grow weary of the music of Nature with its ceaseless constancy of change.

Finally: the analogy furnished by the Organ for the illustration of *personal experience* is very instructive. Human nature is composed of a multitude of parts and powers, each of which is capable of distinct expression, but all of which are necessary to a complete rendering of the life. Here is the sensuous part of our being, with its low reverberations—the intellectual with its high and noble capacities—the spiritual with its refined and mystical tendencies. Here are powers so great as to be embarrassing to their

possessor, and others so small as to be often unrecognized. We are a puzzle to ourselves. Sometimes there comes forth from the secracies of the soul, a strain of music that lifts us heavenward as with wings of aspiration. And at other times we hear a jarring discord or a miserable medley that shames and angers us. What means this contrariety of life—that the same nature should be capable of the best and of the worst expressions? It is the hand at the keyboard which explains it all. It is the moral management of the being, whether by truth or error, good or evil, that determines the issues and effects of life. Who is the master there? look and see. For no one can escape those external influences which evoke latent capacities. We stand between two worlds of spiritual realities, the celestial and the infernal, both of which are bent on the mastery of man. It is Christ or it is Satan, to whom we yield in every act of moral choice. It is Holiness or Sin which is ruling us and developing all of our experiences.

Who shall be the Organist of the soul? This is the critical question for time and eternity. Does it make no difference with an organ, whether a master or a novice touches the keys? Would you permit a costly instrument to be handled by an ignorant or malicious person? And yet how many a nature is being surrendered to low and poor influences, even to the base and bad! We have allowed Passion to move the deep pedals of motive, Selfishness to touch the keys of action, Worldliness to pull out the stops of aim and aspiration. What wonder then that malign results follow, in discordancess of word and deed and character, that sadden and injure us?

There is only one Being who is capable of doing justice to this strange instrument that we call human life. It

is he who created it and endowed it, and is now able and willing to repair and renew it. When an Organ becomes deranged, so as to lose its efficiency, to whom should we apply for its relief but the builder? He knows it as no one else can know it, and he will take a personal interest in its reconstruction. For the same reason do we believe that the Maker of man is the only true Helper and Manager of man. Christ is the Savior that we need, because he is the Author of our being. He is the only one who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He alone can repair the losses and rectify the mistakes of sin. He alone can restore the broken instrument to its tonal virtue. No one can evoke the latent forces of the nature and blend them with harmonic effect, like Jesus. He is able to give to weakness or infirmity a new value, as contributive to moral education. He can set the old and worn out phrases of life to the music of spiritual improvement.

Let it then be Christ for us to live. For when he who is the Head of all principality and power, presides over our thoughts, affections and volitions, he will make of our life a psalm of praise, an anthem of worship, an oratorio of glory. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

"Strike! thou the Master, we the keys,
The anthem of the destinies!
The minor of thy loftier strain,
Our hearts shall breathe the old refrain,
Thy will be done!"

XXIV. ESTHER AND HERODIAS.

THREE are two parallel pictures of womanly influence in the Bible which are very vivid and instructive. One is found in the Old Testament, the other in the New. Both scenes are laid in the midst of palatial surroundings ; and each shows what woman's hand can do with the attribute of power—in the one case for good, and in the other for evil.

For the first of these two pictures, we must go back nearly five hundred years B. C. to the capital of Persia, the magnificent city of Shushan (Susa). There we see the great King Ahasuerus (the Xerxes of Grecian history) in his palace home, which seems like a vision of the Arabian Nights. All is vast and gorgeous and sensual. The great hall of Darius, (whose ruins were recently discovered in Mesopotamia) was one of the wonders of the world. It was a splendid structure, guarded by colossal winged bulls carved in stone, floored with colored marble, lined with pillars sixty feet in height, draped with curtains of many hues, and lit with lustrous perfumed lamps. There in the midst of his court of Oriental pomp and luxury, the monarch presided at a banquet of six months' duration, where the nobles and rulers of his 127 provinces were entertained.

At this great festival an act of royal severity has been performed. The Queen Vashti, having been ordered

to appear in public before his guests, and having refused to submit to such an outrage, has been deposed and exiled from her royal state. More than this, the monarch has, with true eastern absolutism, permitted his favorite, Haman the Amalekite, to gratify his revenge for an insult received from Mordecai the Jew, by obtaining a decree for the wholesale massacre of the Hebrews on a certain day. These things however are of no moment to the imperial voluptuary, who only cares to drown his recollection of the defeat of his army in the far west by a handful of Greek barbarians, in prolonged orgies of sensuality. But to him there comes one day a new sensation. Seated on his jeweled throne, surrounded by the retinue of the court, in the midst of the languorous charm of tropic luxury, he sees a startling spectacle. Down the vista of the approach to the royal divan, where all petitioners must pause and bow and wait for permission to draw near, a woman stands. This is something unprecedented; for none of the sex would ever dare to venture into the presence alone, and none of his harem have been summoned by him for many days. What can it mean?

As we look back upon that scene through the long vista of time, we see there one of the heroines of history. Her story is a romance. She was a Jewess—a daughter of the captive race then scattered through the empire, who had been chosen out of a great number of candidates, to take the place of the dethroned Queen. The beauty of Hadassah had secured for her this high but doubtful honor; and she had in consequence disappeared from the sight of her countrymen, to become an inmate of the luxurious palace which was but a golden prison, and thenceforth to be known as Esther. But one heart follows her

and will not let her forget her nationality. It is her uncle Mordecai, who had been the means of introducing the maiden to the royal inspectors, and who believes that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has his purposes for her to fulfill. So when the terrible decree of extermination is enacted, and no hope for escape from it appears in any other quarter, Mordecai sends word to Esther concerning the desperate plight of her people, and urges her to interfere in their behalf with the King. But she naturally shrinks from the undertaking, pleading that no one is permitted to approach the throne without special authority, and that in any case she is powerless to move the royal will. But the stern Hebrew will not relax his hold upon her. He sends back the warning that she, as well as her people, is involved in the impending doom. Something must be done, and she is the only one to do it ; “and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

Thus adjured, Esther yields at last, and prepares for her strange, difficult, perilous task. She does so with the spirit of her race—humbly looking for Divine help. “Go gather together all the Jews,” she writes to her uncle, “and fast ye for me; I also and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go in unto the King, which is not according to law; and if I perish, I perish.” This is her mood of consecration—the ancient Hebrew plan of waiting on God. But it is followed by a plot of human ingenuity, which no one but a beautiful and fearless woman could have devised or executed.

The well-known story need not be detailed here. Who has not followed its romantic incidents?—the daring venture of the lone queen (attired we may be sure in her

most fascinating apparel, with the royal regalia glittering in gold and jewels on her lovely person—this vision of beauty bowing low in humility at the approach to the throne; then the easy conquest of the susceptible monarch by such an appeal, and his flattering response; then her cautious use of her privilege by inviting the King, and *Haman*, to her banquet; next her delicate advance through all the arts of feminine attractiveness, to another appeal that the King, and *Haman*, should favor her on still another occasion: next her final approach to the royal heart, so subtly, sweetly made, that it melts before her, and is at last wholly at her disposal, and then!—swift and fierce as lighting flash from sunny sky, the revelation, the charge, the fiery accusation against “*that wicked Haman*” and his cruel plot! What followed is written red upon the page of History, where Jew and Gentile have been reading it ever since—thrilled forever by the tragic story of what a woman can do at the call of patriotism, for the rescue of the right and the punishment of the wrong.

For the companion picture to this ancient oriental scene, we must turn to the New Testament, and look at one of the incidents described in the Gospels. We are conducted to another palace and another King. It is Herod Antipas, one of the sons of Herod the Great whose cruelty darkened the holy advent with the massacre of the babes of Bethlehem. This son had succeeded to the government of a portion of his father's realm, and was known as the Tetrarch of Galilee. In moral character he resembled his sire. Crafty, cruel and sensuous, he was known and hated by the people as a despot, who feared not God nor regarded man. His subjects were largely Jews who had been trained

in the severe morality of the Mosaic law, and who were therefore shocked by the ruthless vices and crimes of their Prince, as no other people of that day would have been. And when it is told in the record that Herod had divorced his legal wife, in order that he might consort with a woman who had left her husband, his own brother ; and that this iniquity was paraded on the throne before the eyes of the world, we see what special cause there was for the popular shame and indignation.

It must be remembered also that, just then, there was a great revival of religion throughout the land, under the preaching of John Baptist. This new Elijah had entered on a crusade of reformation, in order to prepare the way of the Lord. It was his stern duty to arouse the public conscience by exposing and rebuking the follies, vices, sins of the time. He did this fearlessly and forcibly—sparing no one who deserved rebuke. As Ahab, with Jezebel at his side, was denounced by the grim Shunamite, so were Pharisees, Publicans and Soldiers arraigned by the new Prophet; and he shrank not from attacking the throne. “It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s wife” was the rebuke hurled against Herod the base and Herodias the foul.

For this act of insolent insubordination (as the guilty pair regarded it), John Baptist was cast into prison, there to languish helplessly for the rest of his life. This was as much as the King dared to do to him. But as Jezebel proved to be a more dangerous enemy than Ahab, so did feminine fury exceed the wrath of the royal despot with respect to John. “Herodias had a quarrel against him and would have killed him, but she could not ; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy.”

Another and stronger reason probably was that "Herod feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet." Herodias however had no such scruples nor fear; and what open force might not accomplish, she determined to attain by means less direct, but even more malignant and certain.

"When a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains and chief estates of Galilee," we gaze on another spectacle reminding us of the great festival at Susa five centuries before. In some one of the royal palaces in the valley of the Jordan, a great hall is splendidly decorated, and filled with a glittering array of noble revellers, whose dissipation extends through days and nights. And now comes another crisis, like and yet unlike the former scene. The Persian king was the object of an appeal in the interests of mercy and salvation. But the Galilean monarch is about to be the victim of a plot of the most refined and diabolical destructiveness. As was customary at that time, public banquets were accompanied by different kinds of side entertainment—such as jugglers, acrobats, professional dancers. But on this occasion the King and his guests are treated to a novel diversion. To his surprise, and their delight, there appears the fairy form of Salome the Queen's daughter, a maiden in the bloom of youth and lustrous beauty. Floating forward in the grace of musical movement and fanciful attire, she performs her wanton but fascinating part so skillfully that the revellers are entranced. Herod, carried away with enthusiasm, knows not what reward to bestow: he declares to her "whatsoever thou shalt ask of me I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom;"—a wild offer, whose literal interpretation he does not think of execu-

ting. But not so with the dancer. Now comes the opportunity for which Herodias has planned and prepared ; and it is with astonishment and horror that the sobered King hears the damsel, prompted by her mother, demand of him—"I will that thou give me by and by in a charger, the head of John the Baptist." What a request ! Did her face pale or her lips tremble as she made it ? Probably not. The blood of the tigress was in her veins ; and she had doubtless been taught that her mother had been so grievously insulted that only the most extreme vengeance could atone for her wrongs. At any rate the deed is done. The miserable King, caught in the trap of his own weakness, and powerless to prevent the catastrophe, is forced to commit a crime the memory of which will haunt him to his dying day. And the last that we see of Herodias in the Bible, is as her daughter bears the ghastly burden in to the mother's feet, and the door closes, leaving her alone with her awful vengeance.

These two pictures, so closely parallel and yet so strangely contrasted, illustrate the different uses of power ; —of power vested in those who might not be expected to use it, but who showed by their respective treatments of responsibility, how *the Right and the Wrong may be served by the hands of woman.*

A crisis comes in the history of the Hebrews. As a captive people at the mercy of their conquerors, they are exposed to the machinations of enemies bent on their destruction. The decree of annihilation has been issued. All the machinery of fate has been prepared. What hope is left ? Where can they look for a deliverer ? Certainly the last place which any Jew would think of was the palace of the King ; and the last person

in that great citadel to be selected as a means of relief, was a woman immured in the privacy of the harem! Esther herself could not have dreamed of any connection with the fortunes of her countrymen. She did not even know of their peril. Enshrined in the luxurious secrecy of the Seraglio, and there guarded with all the jealous watchfulness of Oriental ownership, not a sight or sound of the external world could reach her. She probably thought that she had nothing more to do with her people or their religion, but that her life must be spent in the safe seclusion of mere idle enjoyment.

And yet, not so! Even there—in the inmost retirement of the most exclusive situation in the whole world, the voice of Duty reached her, and she was compelled to face a problem of moral responsibility. It was doubtless the most painful part of Esther's emergency—the shock of being suddenly startled out of a dream-like existence of peace and pleasure, to find herself an Arbiter of Fate—charged with a tremendous burden of national concern.

A similar significance attaches to the other picture that we have contemplated. The palace of the Galilean King contains a proud and fearless woman, who has at last reached the summit of her ambition. At the cost of what appears to us sin and shame, she has attained to the throne, and is well content. No compunction of conscience disturbs her, for she has only done what many others had done or would do, in an age of universal corruption. Her conduct would not be condemned in Rome, Antioch, or Athens; and as for those miserable Jews and their scruples, or that madman from the desert who has been stirring them to revolt, she cares no more for them

than for the dogs in the street. What has she to do with their painful morality or their religious revolutions—she safely ensconced in the purple privacy of imperial power, where life means nothing but self-indulgence and Pagan pride?

And yet, not so! Again we see the most unlikely event taking place. We see the call of Duty forcing its way through all the barriers of exclusiveness like an irresistible necessity, and summoning Herodias to a crisis. She is suddenly brought face to face with the Law of God in the person of his herald. She cannot escape the arraignment. She must decide with regard to her own moral action and its desert. She does decide, wrongly, terribly, but with full sense of responsibility. And so she too is drawn out of her inviolate seclusion and compelled to stand in history—exposed to the glaring light of all after time, as one who did Wrong rather than Right at the crisis of her life.

Moral: *there is no escape from personal accountability, for any of the rational creatures of God.* No castle walls are thick enough, no bolted doors are strong enough to resist the approaches of Truth. No luxurious privacy is so carefully guarded that Duty, calm, cold and inexorable, cannot find and enter its seclusions with unescapable demands. For this is only to say that “the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” It is only to say that wherever the creature is, there the Creator is also, with his moral government. As well try to get away from one’s own shadow, as to evade the emergencies of conscience. Human intelligence involves moral responsibility; and both good and evil are sure to test the soul at some time or in some way.

There is a theory of the sphere of woman which holds it to be a matter of privacy and limitation. It pertains to the home—the fireside only, assigning to her no share in public interests or grave concerns. But this is not the teaching of the Bible or of human history. Woman obscure and feeble! Why, it was a woman's hand that brought sin into the world, and it was a woman's heart that ushered in salvation. From Eve, the wife of the first Adam, to Mary, the mother of the Second, the line of heroines is parallel to that of heroes. There has always been a feminine as well as a masculine factor in the problems of civilization and of religion, as well as society. Power has been entrusted to the female as well as to the male, though of different quality. No delicacy of reserve, no conventional seclusion of the sex can shield woman from her full share of the world's rights and wrongs.

Many an Esther has been reared in the soft seclusions of luxury, where she was shielded from all care and harm, and made to feel that she had but to live her life in peace and pleasure, only to discover (perhaps suddenly and painfully) that she too must meet the stern crisis of Duty, and do or not do something for the weal of the world. And many a Herodias, enthroned in the selfish isolation of pride, looking disdainfully on the coarse and common ways of mere morality with which she had nothing to do, has found that she too has a part to perform in the great drama of Providence, and she cannot refuse to meet the arraignments of God.

Perhaps, however, there is no need to insist on the privileges and powers of woman at this time, when so strong a current is flowing to force her forward into publicity. Everything in education, business and politics,

now seems to be conspiring to elevate women into positions never occupied by them before. This tendency is natural and irresistible. No one with the interests of humanity at heart can refuse to it his sympathy. And yet when we hear some of the arguments adduced by the pioneers of the new era, we may venture to suggest an abatement of their enthusiasm. For the claim that woman is always right and cannot go wrong—that she is therefore needed to rectify the abuses of society, can hardly be allowed. History, sacred and secular, shows that the dread dualism of truth and error bisects both hemispheres of humanity. Esther and Herodias are typical characters, whose counterparts are found in every age—Ruth and Jezebel in Old Testament times, the mother of the Gracchi and Cleopatra in classic lands. Isabella of Castile is offset by Catharine de Medici, Elizabeth of England by Bloody Mary, and Victoria's benign reign by Eugenie's baleful influence. Nor need we refer to common observation and experience for illustration of this immemorial truth—that woman as well as man may err in the use of power. She, not less than he, needs divine direction and guardianship. And if it is true that a new era of influence and authority is about to open for the daughters of Eve, it would be well for them to remember the humility and prayerfulness of Esther on the threshold of her great opportunity, lest the spirit of Herodias find a new occasion in the world.

Once more ; it may be profitable to notice the means resorted to for success in those ancient incidents. Esther and Herodias both prevailed in their emergencies by recourse to the *Art of Pleasing*. It was a truly feminine victory that was won by each of them. For then, as now, and ever, woman's great power has been not physical, in-

tellec-tual or moral, so much as sentimental. She has had her full share of the faculties and forces that rule society and the world ; but her peculiar sphere is that of the affections. Never has she been so mighty as in her appeal to the heart. This is her peculiar endowment. As to man is given strength, to woman is apportioned beauty. Both Esther and Herodias knew this and acted accordingly. The Persian queen needed no one to advise her as to her best method of approach to the royal favor. Nor does any woman require to be informed about the delicacy of tact, the attention to the toilet, the fine suggestions of appearance and deportment which marked every step of that feminine campaign. With the intuitive sagacity of the heart, Esther laid siege to the heart of the king ; and her victory at last was as purely sentimental, as it was legitimate and complete.

Therein she was a model. Woman should be womanly. She ought to know where her real power lies, and what her true mission is. To her has been given the decorative function in this world. It is for her to furnish the graces and charms of existence which render life not only strong and pure, but bright and pleasant and sweet. Not that the female part is merely ornamental ; for the work and burdens of woman are of the most practical and serious description. But she supplies what man lacks—the element of Beauty. What he builds, she can embellish. He furnishes the strong framework, which she is to drape with the flowing lines and smooth surfaces of adornment. The art of pleasing should be cultivated. Esther's grace and loveliness were of national importance at a great crisis ; her people needed them and God used them. So should all true feminine charms be regarded and used. It is the

duty of woman to be beautiful—in face, figure, dress, deportment, character, conduct or life. If she have not some of these attributes, she has others, for to none of her sex has been denied some power of pleasing.

The world needs this element of Beauty—of whatever kind it be. There is so much that is hard and coarse and unlovely in life, that there is positive utility in whatever things are graceful, sweet and winsome. For which reason it is certain that the instincts of woman toward ornamentation should not be discouraged, as long as they consist with reason and morality. Any scheme of education which does not provide for the proper use of this attribute, must be defective. It remains to be seen whether the present tendencies toward public life and duties will interfere with this natural and benign function of womanhood, or only enlarge its scope of usefulness.

But, *remember Herodias!* Recall that picture of the misuse of the art of pleasing. It shows that Beauty and its charms may be as active in the service of evil as of good, and that when so exercised it becomes a malign and mighty power. Probably not another person in the realm could have brought about the death of John Baptist. Herod would have withheld any other kind of appeal; but he was helpless before the wiles of a woman's fascination. All history bears witness to the same strange power. From the mother of mankind leading the first man astray, to the last victim of the siren's spell, this world has seen few forms of temptation so potent as that of Beauty in the service of sin. But this only warns against the perversion of a divine endowment. That this warning should be heeded, the slightest acquaintance with society will assure us. How difficult it is to keep ornamentation within the

limits of propriety, pleasure safe from dissipation, and expenditure from extravagance ! The beautiful so easily becomes the vain and selfish, the art of pleasing is so often the means of blandishment, that we cannot avoid looking with concern on those who possess these graceful endowments.

Let then Esther's safeguard be remembered. When confronted with the crisis which summoned her to a public service of the most important and difficult character, she drew on her native resources, and planned a feminine campaign of fascination. This was her right—to use the weapons with which God had armed her. But her first and main reliance was on humble prayer for divine help. It was that dependence which gave its prevailing charm to her beauty, and that precaution made of her art of pleasing one of the links in the chain of Providence.

Let woman ever seek and find this Helper, and she cannot be too graceful, lovely and charming for the world's good.

XXV.

THE SEA OF GLASS.

"A sea of glass mingled with fire."—REV. 15:2.

I REMEMBER a sunset at sea. All day the vast ocean had been heaving into swells and ridges and foaming crests, as the wind swept over it. The plunging billows dashed their spray into the air, and the noise of warring waters, with the rushing of the gale, filled one's ears with confusion. But as the day declined the tumult subsided, and at last a beautiful calm soothed all the sea to rest. When the sun neared the horizon, firing the sky with splendors of gold and crimson that made the west look like one great city in a blaze, lo the placid plain reflected every tint and hue of that glory perfectly. There seemed to be a double sunset, of an upper and an under sky.

We gazed spellbound on the magnificent spectacle, as on a gorgeous bridal of earth and heaven ; and then it came to me that perhaps this was what the Seer of Patmos beheld, when he looked out from the rocky isle and saw beyond the waters of the Aegean the pictures of the far future. A great white throne occupied by the majesty of the Most High—that throne surrounded with the four and twenty Elders who represent the exaltation of the saints—in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain—before it the burning lamps of the seven-fold or all perfect Spirit—and in front of all this grand imagery of divine realities, “a sea of glass mingled with fire.”

Of what was its smooth bright surface an emblem, but of that mirroring of the celestial by the terrestrial, which is to be the issue of the Gospel dispensation? It is the most perfect picture imaginable of the glory of the upper skies received and responded to by the lower world. It is a prophecy of that perfect harmony between man and God, which is to be the consummation of time. After the stormy day of sinful confusion is over, there will come a still soft evening of perfect peace. Then the troubled waters of humanity will be smoothed by the hand of grace into purity and calm, so that the burning splendors of heaven will be perfectly reflected by the purity and happiness of earth. Then the divine holiness will see its faultless counterpart in human righteousness; the divine law will be closely corresponded to by human obedience; the divine love will be tenderly answered by human affection. Then shall the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, when we awake in his likeness; and forever and forever heaven and earth will shine in one bright marriage of harmony—"a sea of glass mingled with fire."

Let us consider the fact and the method of this great reconciliation.

1. *Reconciliation implies estrangement.* And can there be any question as to the separation and discord now existing between heaven and earth? One look at the storm swept sea of human history, on which the soft sheen of celestial beauty falls, only to be shattered and confounded with angry glooms, would show that God and man are not now at peace. But there may be those who refuse to recognize the supernatural as being in any relation to the affairs of men. Take then any other standard of judgment, and observe its testimony with regard to the human

heart. What does conscience say? Are you at peace with that moral monitor?—do you always conform to your own ideas of right, so that the outer life is a perfect expression of the inner scheme of morality? Turn to the dominant regulations of society as they are embodied in the laws of christendom; and who can say that he has always made of his conduct a faultless reflection of that standard of rectitude? Or consider the ideals of art, the principles of philosophy, the laws of science; can we exhibit in our lives a complete compliance with them? Or look at the greatest authority of all, the economy that we call Nature: and did the person ever live who was fully and always in accord with the system of things?

No—there is no peace anywhere. In whatever direction we look, we find difference and discord. Leaving religion out of the account entirely, we find that natural truth, beauty and goodness condemn us. We are, partially if not entirely, at times if not continually, out of joint with the world, with society, with truth, with our own better selves. There is no harmony between what we ought to be and what we are. We fall below our own hopes and resolutions. But if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts. If we are at variance with the creation, we cannot be at one with the Creator. And we are thus prepared to accept and confirm the judgments of the Bible on the moral state of man. From alpha to omega, the word of God assumes the sinfulness of humanity. It declares that all are gone astray; there is none that doeth good, no not one: all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And this indictment is in no degree more severe than that uttered by our own

moral judgment, by the voice of history and by the testimony of nature.

Between the ideal and the real, the celestial and the earthly, we find a relation similar to that between the pictured sky and the rolling raging sea. There the sunset burns with oriental pomp of color, there the moonlight pours out its silvery charm, there the ancient stars shine on serenely: but below is the broken, changing, wrathful waste of waters. No reflection of that upper peace and beauty can be yielded by such confusion. God shines on the world through nature, and the light of his countenance is answered by impurity and violence. He reveals his perfections through his word, and ignorance and evil are the result. He pours forth his glory in the person of his own beloved Son, and the Judgment Hall and Calvary are the reply.

Can there be then a more important question to ask than one which would discover a correction for this state of things? The great and crying need of humanity is for the means of reconciliation between the higher and the lower. Who will compose this strife between the possible and the actual, so that God and man may be as one? For they ought to be at peace. The Creator did not intend that his creatures should be opposed to him; nor ought they to be content with their estrangement. The true interests both of heaven and earth demand that harmony exist between them. There will never be a normal healthful state of things, until the restless troubled waters are smoothed into a calm which will mirror the upper skies on its breast, and give back unbroken the sunshine and starlight that falls on it from above. And this composure of distracted elements should be profound and permanent.

2. *The means by which reconciliation takes the place of estrangement between God and man.* In the beautiful vision of the Apocalypse, the Seer of Patmos beheld "a great white throne" as the emblem of the divine government—supreme over all things, at the foot of which was spread the smooth bright expanse of the sea of harmony. But "in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, stood a Lamb as it had been slain." This was the symbol of the Atonement; and it shows the mediatorial place of the sacrificial death of the Redeemer—between the throne of divine dominion and the sea of glass mingled with fire. This is the means by which the harmony of heaven and earth is to be effected. It is through Jesus Christ—his life and death, that the stormy sea of sinful humanity is to be composed into the calm that makes of the soul a dwelling place of God.

How is this benign result accomplished? In two ways. We find peace with God by looking unto Jesus for what he is himself, and by deriving from him a similar condition for ourselves. "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" is the first voice of the Gospel. But why look to him, and what do we see when we look? We see, first of all, our own nature in a state of absolute holiness. Jesus of Nazareth is a human being without blemish, stainless in character, unimpeachable in conduct, symmetrical in development, and perfect in all the issues and effects of life. He stands the test of every kind of inspection. His own self-consciousness, that sharpest critic of life, never accused him of wrong; "I do always those things that please Him." His intimate companions, the disciples who knew him in private, never found in him the least occasion for reproach: even

the traitor was compelled to confess that he had betrayed “innocent blood.” His enemies who had watched and waited for a ground of accusation, could at last do nothing more than bribe witnesses to make false charges against him, and the tribunal before which he was arraigned acknowledged “I find no fault in him.”

To this human testimony, the supernatural was added. Satan and his demons made their fiercest assaults upon the white front of Immanuel, and recoiled in defeat: —“The prince of this world hath nothing in me.” Angels from heaven looked with rapture on the sinless Jesus, and found in him congenial society for their own innocence. Yea the heavens opened above him, and the voice of Supreme Holiness was heard: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Still more—the verdict of history has confirmed these voices of the past. No life lived on earth has been observed so closely, examined and judged so unsparingly, as that of the Christ. By loving friends and hostile critics, every word that he spoke and every deed that he performed has been inspected, weighed and measured, and the result is that today the highest ideals of Art and Philosophy, the ripest judgment of History and Morality, the most advanced thought of true Reform, unite in crowning the victim of Calvary as the Victor of Time. He is the apotheosis of human life and character.

Therefore when we look to him we see that it is possible for our nature to be in perfect accord with the divine. Earth and heaven may correspond, as the smooth sea reflects the sunset sky. It is no faint legend of a golden age lost in the haze of distant Eden or Atlantis, when men were demigods: nor is it a prophet’s vision of an era

yet to come, a glorious day whose shining feet have not yet climbed the eastern hills to bring the heavenly life to earth. Even here and now, historic fact reveals to us this actuality—"he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." As in a mirror, we behold in Jesus the glory of God, and we know that the human may be a counterpart of the divine.

Now consider what this means in the Christian scheme. When we see in Jesus Christ a "sea of glass mingled with fire," we behold the means of securing our own peace with God and becoming like him. For it was not for his own sake that the Eternal Son was made flesh. He had been in the bosom of the Father before all worlds, the very effulgence of his glory. He lived and died as a man, that human nature might become divinized: as he prayed to the Father "the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them." Think of that. It is the purpose of Christ to share his own honors with his people. If he is the Light of the World, they are to let their light "so shine before men that they may glorify" the Father in heaven. If he is at peace with God, his promise to them is "peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." If he is the well-beloved of the Father, he tells his disciples "as the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." If he and the Father are one, his purpose is that "they also may be one in us." And he crowns this wonderful union with the assurance "as the Father sent me into the world, so send I you."

Thus the Christian is to be a reproduction of Christ, as Christ is an embodiment of God. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to enable us to put on "the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that

created him." It is the provision of grace that we shall "all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." And the certain result of such a union with Christ will be that the Christian finally attains to the same divine likeness and society; for in the eternal world "there shall be no more curse: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." Will not that blessed state be a perfect realization of the figure—"a sea of glass mingled with fire?"

There are different kinds of peace possible to man, as to nature. We have seen the smooth surface of a stagnant pool, far hidden amid the woods where no wind can ruffle it; and so we have observed the sluggish repose of an idle life, secluded from care. We have noticed the level plain of an ice-covered lake, stiff and still beneath the blasts that had frozen it; and so we have looked at the hard composure of the slave of asceticism, who has been compelled to an unnatural immobility. But none of these conditions could fulfill the Savior's words—"Come unto me and I will give you rest." The peace which he possessed and imparted did not consist in the absence of all strife or effort, but in a triumph over every troubrous element. The calm of his soul was that of a sunset sea, whose storms have spent their force, and left the waters at last to sleep beneath the brooding skies. And it is only as we have "the same mind which was in Christ" that we can attain to his beatitude. This will never be the Nirvana of Oriental imagination—a slumberous felicity of eternal quietude, where all thought and care, all hope and

memory, are lost in a changeless tranquility of content. The sea of glass mingled with fire denotes the peace of equilibrium, the harmony of balanced oppositions, which will make of human perfectness the intelligent and sympathetic counterpart to an ever active God.

Surely it goes without the saying that such a result as this can never be secured by anything less than a divine cause. Those who are trusting to the efforts of self-culture and control for their final deliverance from moral discord, or who cherish the hope that as nature always tires of storms at length and provides rest for its troubled elements, so human nature will by its own reactions reach a final repose, should remember that the originating cause of sinful disorder remains constant. It is satanic interference. Sin is not of human origination. It was born of an infernal parentage; and the envy, malice and revenge which inspired the first temptation by which man was lured to the fall, will never subside. As long as Satan lives, so long will he do his utmost to perpetuate the discord he has already engendered between the Creator and the creature.

Let no troubled heart therefore leave this terrible factor of the problem out of the account. The unrest and pain of your existence have a supernatural cause which will defy all of your efforts to counteract it. The tempest that is vexing you will never subside. It blows from out the mouth of the pit, and is sustained by the undying breath of hell. Alas for the many fleets that have been wrecked, the rich armadas and proud argosies that have gone down beneath that awful enemy! No, there is no hope in self or its surroundings, for the peace which our storm-tossed souls desire.

And yet the Star of Promise shines brightly in the sky, conveying blest assurance to all who look up to it. It announces God's own provision for our desperate needs. It tells of One who was manifested to "destroy the works of the devil." History affirms that Christ has already delivered multitudes from the infernal spell, and Prophecy declares that he is yet to free the whole world from its malignant tempests. Try him for yourself and see. Bring sin and shame to the feet of Jesus and ask for pardon and purification. Open your sad secrets to him and pray for consolation. Spread your doubts and fears, agitation of thought and complications of feeling before him, and submit them all to his grace. Then will you find that now as of old, he will come walking over the wrathful waters, and smoothing them all to rest beneath his advent feet. He will speak peace to the storm-tossed soul and there will be a "great calm."

This peace is a product and a part of his own experience, according to the promise—"my peace I give unto you." It is something already tested and approved by the service and sacrifice of his life. Purchased at the cost and won as the prize of his atoning death, it now shines as the crown jewel of his divine glory in heaven. As such he would share it with his people; and as such they may accept it, as something which no human or infernal interference can possibly distrust. It is the peace of God that passeth understanding, guarding the heart and mind by Jesus Christ.

Such experiences are being enjoyed by multitudes of believers all the time. They are blessed in the present but still more happy in the future; for they are filled with hope of greater joys to come, when they will share their